

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 339.]

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1865.

[PRICE 2d.]

AT THE BAR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A CRUISE UPON WHEELS," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XII. THE ART MYSTIC.

WE are not always most in earnest when we speak most gravely, nor is it by any means invariably the case that our meaning is a light one when we speak triflingly, and cover what we have to say with a joke. There are men whom nothing will induce to speak in a solemn tone, even when they are dealing with questions which, to themselves at least, are of vital importance. A man of this sort will speak of some great battle in which he has been engaged as a "nasty scrimmage," and as he seizes the shell which has fallen, but not yet exploded, and hurls it over the battlements, will very likely address the terrible missile with some slang phrase, as if he were dealing with a schoolboy's firework. Mr. Julius Lethwaite was a man of this sort.

The news brought by Jonathan Goodrich, and communicated by him to his employer in the dining-room—while Mr. Seroop occupied his leisure as best he might in the sanctum—was of the most startling and disquieting sort, and the old clerk was not always able to control his emotion as he told his tale. Owing to the continued indifference manifested by Mr. Lethwaite as to all matters of business, and his obstinate determination not to interfere in his own affairs except by deputy, and through the agency of Mr. Goodrich, it had come to pass that the acting partner in "Lethwaite and Gamlin" had managed to possess himself of an undue influence in the management of the concern, and did, indeed, pretty much as he liked. There is no substitute to be found in this world for personal supervision. The eye of the master must be over every work that is to prosper, and the deputed authority which Jonathan Goodrich sought to exercise on behalf of his chief would not do. While Lethwaite drummed at home, or consulted Mr. Cornelius Vampi in his observatory, poor old Jonathan strove hard to look after his interests in the City, but strove to little purpose. Mr. Gamlin was too much for him. He had bought his way into the firm with the conviction that he was to be the managing partner, and he meant to be so, and was.

Now this gentleman had been very much

tempted by certain American investments which had come in his way, and had (as it will be remembered was hinted by old Goodrich on a former occasion) dabbled in them to an alarming extent. He had gone out of his way, too, to make large purchases of cotton, and this even to a greater extent than Goodrich himself was aware of. Then came a panic. Men began to talk gloomily about American securities, and of the impossibility of getting cotton from the Southern States if there should be a blockade of their ports. And all this time the old clerk was constantly coming to his master with entreaties that he would take some active part in the management of affairs so nearly concerning him, and beseeching him to stir before it was too late. One such interview we have already described, and it will serve as a specimen of many others. Mr. Lethwaite was not a man of business, and nothing—not even self-interest, the motive which he always spoke of as the sole instigator of all human action—could make a man of business of him. And now the crisis, so long prophesied of by poor old Goodrich, had come. The tidings which came by each American mail were worse and worse, and at length it had come to pass that on one fine Monday morning Mr. Gamlin had not made his appearance at the office in the City, and that on inquiry made at his private house, it transpired that he had not been seen or heard of since the previous Saturday afternoon. Further examination into the affairs of the firm went to prove that this gentleman had, previous to his departure, collected into his own hands all outstanding debts, and drawn out every penny standing at the banker's in the name of Lethwaite and Gamlin, besides turning every security on which he could lay his hands into hard money. This done, he had disappeared.

And this was the news which the poor old clerk had come to break—he hardly knew how—to his employer, on the occasion when he had found him, as we have seen, so busy with his musical studies, that he could hardly be got to attend to the old man's tale. He had got used to "Jonathan's panics," as he used to call them, and thought at first that this was only one of the series, and it was long, even after he had succeeded in getting his master's ear, before Goodrich could make him believe what it was that had happened, and that Mr. Gamlin had shown himself so little under the influence of

self-interest, as to be guilty of the extreme folly of turning out a rogue.

When the evil news was at length brought completely home to him, one of the very first things he had said was this :

"My poor old Jonathan, what will become of you?"

We have seen how lightly this blow fell upon Julius Lethwaite. Perhaps he did not perfectly realise it. Perhaps his very incapacity for business did him service here. He had vague ideas that it would "all come right." He had heard of so many instances of people "under a cloud," as it was called, for a time, and then emerging again not so much the worse for that temporary overshadowing. He had known men obliged to give up their establishments, and live very quietly for a time, and till they could tide over certain business embarrassments, who had still kept on, and managed to emerge at last, right side uppermost. But the old clerk shook his head. They would keep things quiet, and go on as long as they could. The head clerk was a very superior man, and those two would work and do all they could, but still he had little hope. It did not matter for him so much; if things came to the worst he had saved a little money, and he could most likely get other employment. But with Mr. Julius it was different. He had been used to luxury, had never known what it was to do without anything that he wanted. What was he to do?

And when our cynical friend was alone he did for a moment think of these things, but, as has been said, hardly understanding them. He had a vague idea that he ought to do something. He looked round his room, and thought that he must certainly, at any rate, reduce his expenditure. He saw all the luxurious things that surrounded him, and summed up what they were worth; the pictures, the plate, the china, and knick-knacks. He called to mind the enormous rent that he was paying, and determined that that must be reduced at once, and that he must make a move to less fashionable quarters. He even sat down at once and wrote a letter giving warning to his landlord, and he felt as if he were quite doing business, and perhaps even was not without some sense of enjoyment.

Then he got up and took a spell at the drums again, and finding that he got on better, began to reflect upon what his friend Scroop had told him of the earnings to be made out of that instrument. Finally, he reflected that since the predictions of Mr. Vampi had been in this particular case so wonderfully verified, he could not do better than go and tell him about it.

Cornelius Vampi sat in his observatory deeply engaged in study. It was evening, and he had had a busy day of it. To judge by appearances, his labours had been of a mixed character, partly medical and partly astrological. For besides the papers which lay before him, and with which he was now engaged—besides the books and the globe, all evidently recently in use, there was a small fire alight in the chemist's

stove, and various vessels used in the concoction of medicine stood about, some full, some empty, some heated, some allowed to get cold, while in a great earthen jar close at hand were quantities of herbs, still damp and smoking, from which all the virtue had been extracted, and which were waiting Mr. Smaggsdale's leisure to be thrown away. Other members of the same family were placed in convenient positions ready for use.

Mr. Smaggsdale was certainly not at leisure just now. Surrounded by pots and pans and earthenware pipkins, he was engaged, under his master's direction, in watching the different preparations as they simmered and bubbled through different stages, ready, when the "moment of projection" arrived, to proclaim the fact, in order that the adept himself might take advantage of the important crisis when his drugs should be in the fittest state for combination with each other. So "old Smagg" had to keep constantly on the look-out, prying and peering into the different vessels one after another, now lifting a cover with caution, now tilting a lid so as to modify the heat of the liquid which it covered, removing this compound into a cooler place, and that to a warmer, adding a little distilled water here, and a pinch of herbs there, and stirring with a wooden spoon everywhere.

His master had evidently deputed all this inferior kind of labour to "old Smagg," with perfect confidence in his will and ability to discharge it. The philosopher himself kept to his papers, occupied with such mental exercise as he could trust nobody but himself to engage in. He had had a busy day of it, as has been said, and besides his ordinary work in the shop, had had visits respectively from an old lady, who believed, as did Vampi himself, in an elixir of youth—at which, indeed, Mr. Smaggsdale was then at work—and also from a young lady, who had brought back her horoscope in disgust, and not liking her destiny, had requested *to have it altered*. The astrologer had replied, with some show of reason, that he did not profess to construct destinies to order, but only to transmit to those who sought his services, the revelations which he was able to read in the heavenly bodies. On hearing this, the young lady had cast, as it were, her destiny from her, and falling back upon incredulity, had torn her written fate to pieces before the astrologer's eyes, saying that the young man bestowed upon her by the document was not "her sort," and finally expressing her belief that our philosopher was little better than an impostor.

The infamous accusation seemed to glance off our great man without harming him. Nay, he could even afford to treat the calumny with ridicule.

"An impostor, Smagg," he said, smiling benignantly, as he addressed himself to his colleague. "That's what the wench called me. We must remember that, Smagg."

Mr. Smaggsdale had newly come from an interview with his wife, in the course of which the good lady, hearing from her husband of the

epithet bestowed on the astrologer by this irreverent young woman, had endorsed it with the greatest energy. Fresh from his wife's tirade, old Smagg, who, as we know, had no opinions of his own, was, for the time, in somewhat a sceptical mood, and he had not been long enough among the retorts and crucibles for the influence of the observatory to react upon his credulity. So he confined himself to his own immediate occupation, and holding the lid of one of the pipkins in his hand, and peering into the vessel to which it belonged, he said: "It's on the bile, master."

"I am sorry for that poor girl, Smagg. I could have told her much that it would have been well for her to know."

"It will bile in another minute," resumed Smagg.

"Remove it to a little distance, and let it simmer for half an hour," replied his master. "Do you know, Smagg," he continued after a while, leaning back in his chair, and seeming to expand in a sense of his own exaltation, "I feel at times as if I should shortly be able to see into futurity merely by an act of the will, and without having recourse to the stars at all."

Mr. Smaggsdale, in his transitional state of belief, did not seem to know what to say to this, so he merely replied:

"Ah, that *would* be nice."

"The very future of the human race seems sometimes to be spread out before me, Smagg," continued the philosopher, without noticing this prosaic remark. "With the advance of time, and the progress of education, I believe that it will get gradually better and better, and wiser and wiser, and at the same time more and more practical. I should not wonder if a time were to come, for instance, when people ceased to say 'Good morning' at meeting, or 'Good night' at separating for the evening, saying to themselves, 'So and so will not have a better morning or a better night for my saying these words, nor will he fare the worse for my leaving them unsaid.' On the same principle the lawyer may abandon one day his wig, the lord mayor his mace, and the common council-man his gown. Then as to war, Smagg, do you mean to tell me that that madness can go on much longer? Why, such engines of offence and defence will be invented by modern ingenuity as will shortly render it impossible. We have got rid of the duello, Smagg, which is a battle between man and man; and war, which is only a duello between nations instead of individuals, must follow. Public opinion settles which man is right in the case of a private quarrel, and public opinion will settle which side is right in a quarrel between nations. It gets more influence every day, and as to the man who will not listen to it, why, society will have nothing to say to him, and that is a punishment which he can't bear. Oh, there are wonderful times coming, Smagg. I don't say that you or I will live to see them; their full development we certainly shall *not* live to see unless one of us is the Wandering Jew."

"And that's not me, sir," interposed Smagg, beginning, under the influence of all this prophesying, to yield his belief.

"Very well, then, you can only hope to see the beginning of the great times, Smagg; but the beginning you may see, and then you'll find that my words are confirmed, and then you'll believe."

"Oh, sir, don't imagine for a moment that I *don't* believe."

"You vacillate, old Smagg; you know you vacillate, at times."

"Ah, sir," replied the old man, in the tone of one who deprecates well-merited wrath, "it's only for a moment now and then. Do you never doubt yourself, when the things don't happen as you've foretold them?"

"I doubt!" cried his master. "Doubt the influence of the stars! Doubt the sublime theories that great minds have, after years of study, so painfully and laboriously eliminated from a continuous contemplation of the movements and combinations of the heavenly bodies? Why, Smagg, what are you talking about? And what do you mean, pray, by talking about 'things not happening as I've foretold them?' When was that, Smagg? When was that?"

"Oh, sir, I didn't mean any offence."

"Offence! no; I know you didn't. But what did you mean?"

"Well, sir, for instance, just now, there was the young woman who wouldn't have her horoscope at any price. She said it was all wrong."

The wrath of Cornelius rose at this to a pitch almost of sublimity.

"You miserable, hesitating funkard," he burst out, coining a word in the fury of the moment. "What! Influenced by the opinion of that insensate lump of idiotcy which—I do not say *who* but *which*—has just left us? What! You would set the reckless assertion of that profane wretch against the dicta (the deliberate opinions) of one who has devoted his life to study and research! But you had better go on a step further, in endorsing the opinions of that enlightened personage, and call me as she did—an impostor!"

"Oh, sir, don't. You make me shudder."

"Shudder on, you child of Saturn, and may the evil influences of that dark and sinister planet, under which you were, as the poet has it, 'littered,' descend upon you unmitigated by the protecting interposition of any less malignant celestial influences. For shame, Smagg, for shame! To think that I should have lived to see the day when the very flesh and blood that I have nourished turns against me, and joins with a sordid scullion to braud me with the title of impostor!"

Poor old Smagg was firm in his belief again now. The matrimonial influence was weak; that of the philosopher was in the ascendant, and he was full of remorse.

"Oh, Mr. Vampi, sir," he cried, "forgive me. It was only a slip of the tongue, and it was but for a moment. I know it was foolish and ungrateful too, to be in doubt even *for* a

moment. I know that you're right, sir, and that if things don't come as you say, it's the things' fault, and not yours. I know that you can read the stars, and make out what they're up to with a mere cock of the telescope here. I know that you can do what you like with them, and that when Venus is breaking into the bloody house of Mars, or Jupiter is up to some dreadfulness in his second chamber, that you can come forward and get Orion to tackle them with his belt, or Saturn to enclose them with his ring, or some other lady or gentleman to interfere and make things all square again. Oh yes, sir, I'm aware of all this, and how you forewarned me when Pisces was dead against me, and how the fish-bone stuck in my throat that very day, and I was near to choking. I've seen the very stars wink as you've looked at them, sir; and the ivinly bodies come out from behind a cloud when you've been in wants of them. And I've seen you overcome by evil influences, too; and I remember the day when Mercury was one too many for you, and you said you was sure he'd play you a trick, and, sure enough, that very evening the telescope fell down with a crash and broke every bit of glass in its body. Oh yes, sir, I've known all these wonderful things, and have had experience of 'em, and yet at times the unbelieving fit will come upon me strong and make a beast of me in spite of all the advantages I have had. But, sir, it ain't my fault, I do assure you, and if ever such a thing should happen again—which, if possible, it shan't—I do entreat and hope, with all my heart, that you'll believe that Saturn—under whom I was a-littered—is at fault, and that it is all his doings, sir, and none of mine."

This extraordinary profession of faith and jargon of second-hand astrology seemed to appease our philosopher to some extent, and master and man were both settling down again to their respective occupations, when a knock came at the door, and Mr. Julius Lethwaite entered the sanctum.

"Ah, Mr. Lethwaite, glad to see you, sir," said the astrologer. "I've been looking into your affairs up there," and he pointed to the skylight, "and I don't like the look of them still. But how are you, sir? You don't look quite the thing."

"Oh yes, I'm all right enough: a little weighed down, as usual, by a sense of the corruptness of human nature; but I'm used to that. And so you still don't like the look of my prospects?"

"No, sir, I don't," replied the sage. "It's no use my saying I do if I don't, is it?"

"Not a bit," said the other, carelessly. "And you can't hold out any better prospect for the future?" he continued.

"Not for the present, sir," was the reply. "But we must hold on, sir, and be hopeful. You've got some good friends up there," and he again pointed towards the skylight, "as well as some fierce enemies, and so I say we must hope."

Mr. Lethwaite was silent for a time, and sat staring in an absent manner at the adept, as if he had really hardly noticed before what a remarkable individual this was with whom he had come in contact. It was a warm night rather, and the little room was made especially hot by the stove at which old Smagg was cooking his herbs. Cornelius had taken off his coat—his flesh alone kept him warm enough, he said—and was puffing and blowing over his studies, red-hot with the exertion, and with his jolly face suffused with perspiration. Every now and then he threw his huge form back in his chair with a gasp, making the fabric creak again as if it must give way. At such times, too, he would take the opportunity of mopping his brow with his handkerchief, and would emerge from behind it, looking happier, and smiling more radiantly than ever.

"And this is the man," thought our cynic to himself, "who consumes the midnight oil in study. This is the 'pale student' who wears himself out in profound speculations concerning the unseen world; who would fain pry into futurity and extort their secrets from those mysterious planets which whirl above our heads. It is inconceivable."

Lethwaite sat staring at the adept in speechless astonishment for some time, and then, when next the philosopher leant back in his chair to take breath, said abruptly:

"You make some good guesses, Vampi, sometimes."

"Ah, Mr. Lethwaite, the old phrase again—guesses."

"Yes; and, curiously enough, they've turned out right in my case. I've come to grief."

"What do you mean?" asked the philosopher, laying down his papers, and pushing his spectacles up upon his forehead.

"I mean what I say," replied Lethwaite. And with that he proceeded to lay before the astrologer some of the circumstances relating to the present embarrassment of his affairs, and the future difficulties in which he was likely to be involved, with which the reader is already acquainted.

It was impossible to ignore the fact that as this recital went on an expression of something very like triumph became developed upon the countenance of our corpulent astrologer. Now and then he would even direct a glance towards old Smagg, who was still at work at the stove, which glance said, as plainly as eyes can speak, "I hope you hear this, and observe its bearing on what we were talking of just now." No doubt—for our philosopher was a good fellow at heart—no doubt he was sorry for the misfortunes which threatened his friend, but still, what a thing to have his predictions come true; what a thing to have them borne out by facts!

Mr. Lethwaite did not fail to observe the condition of self-complacency into which the great man had fallen. Here was a case of motive for him. "He is actually glad of my misfortunes," he said to himself, "because through them his prophecies are verified."

"Well, sir," began Cornelius, when he had heard all, "I'm extremely sorry for what has occurred—grieved, I may say; still you must remember that we've no reason to despair, having some good friends among the planets to espouse our interests. But, sir, you'll allow me, in the mean time, to make one observation—I do hope, after this, that you'll not talk again about guesses."

Lethwaite had opened his mouth to reply, when there came a low tap at the door, which was then opened a very little way, and a voice was heard to pronounce in a hoarse whisper the dissyllable,

"Smaggsdale."

The gentleman thus appealed to got up from his place, and, shuffling across the room, went out for a moment, and, after holding a whispered conference with some one outside, reappeared, and, closing the door behind him, uttered these words:

"It's my wife, sir."

"Well, and what does she want?" asked the philosopher.

"It's the lady, sir."

"What lady?" asked Cornelius again. He had hardly collected his faculties.

"The strange lady, sir. Mrs. Smaggsdale wants to know if she shall send her away?"

"Not by any means—not by any means," answered the astrologer, getting up and putting on his coat. "I'll come down directly."

Mr. Vampi stretched and wriggled himself into his coat with considerable effort, having previously, out of a feeling of intense deference to the sex, a member of which he was about to confront, arranged his scant hair with a pocket-comb before a scrap of looking-glass which stood in a corner of the room. Mr. Lethwaite could not repress a smile as he witnessed this small ceremonial act; but it must be owned that, if the smile was meant to be a cynical one, it was a distinct failure.

CHAPTER XIII. THE STRANGE LADY.

CORNELIUS VAMPI was no ordinary fortune-teller. The vulgar arts of reading the future prospects of his clients by means of palmistry, or by the combinations to be made with a pack of cards, were altogether beneath him. Indeed, his feeling with regard to all such practices was something more than negative. He looked upon them as sacrilegious—as bringing discredit on a great cause. "What," he would say, "read a man's future by consulting the marks upon his hand! Lines which can be affected by the habits of his body, by the use he makes of his limbs, as he grows to maturity. The peasant-boy who handles the plough will, by its use, acquire one set of lines, while the student, who is for ever writing or turning over the leaves of his beloved volumes, will have another. But these cannot show the future of his life; while, as to divination by the cards, it is even more vile and more vulgar still. An invention of man—a set of signs put together to please a

foolish king of France; a thing that once was not; why, it is preposterous! But the stars," quoth Cornelius, gazing at them through the open window of his garret, "ah, with them it is widely different. Man has had no hand in their construction, nor can he by his strength or his wisdom affect their movements by the fraction of a degree. They can assist him, but he cannot influence them."

Strange to see that great ponderous creature, with his bulky frame, his florid countenance, and his mighty capacity for enjoyment, leaning against the framework of his open window, rapt in contemplation of those wondrous bodies which live in that eternity of space to whose extremity our gaze tries vainly to penetrate. That window was to him so much. It seemed to give him access to another world. Yes, this house, whose foundation was laid in the dirt, rose, as it seemed to this strange man, to the very gates of heaven. Not more superior in his eyes was a man's head, in which such glorious thoughts and noble aspirations dwell, to his feet, that are for ever in contact with the mire, than was the upper region of that poor dwelling-place of his to that lower part which came in contact with the very mud and sewage of the town.

Who can tell what that window was to Cornelius Vampi? It was a link between him and the heavens, between the terrestrial and the celestial worlds. The town in which our enthusiast lived, the squalid neighbourhood which surrounded him, could not spoil his prospect from that window, nor take away from the splendour of that scenery which he loved so well to look upon. That celestial scenery was everything to this man; and not the Chaldean peasant, who gazes on the heavenly bodies as he lies out upon his native plains, had more free access to the gods of his idolatry than had Cornelius Vampi in his London garret.

What do we, who are entirely reasonable, know of such happiness as was enjoyed by this enthusiast? He had a great faith. He knew no anxieties. His life was pure. It never crossed his mind to fear that he should have less to live upon than his daily wants necessitated. His business was a good one, and brought him all that he required. His astrological studies were outside and beyond it altogether, for it must never be supposed that these were profitable to our philosopher. Not one penny did Vampi gain by his vaticinations. Not from his richest clients, not from Lethwaite himself, in his most prosperous days, had Vampi ever taken money. These things were too sacred in his eyes to be made subservient to lucre. When he predicted the events which the future had in store for a rich man, or cast the horoscope of a servant-wench, he was engaging in a solemn act, to associate which with gain would have been nothing less than a crime. He would have expected the power which he believed dwelt in him to have deserted him if he had thought of such a thing. To believers, to those who consulted him gravely and in earnest,

what he had to give was given freely, and for nothing.

And let no one suppose that Vampi was an impostor. An impostor is one who, with an eye to profit, or, at any rate, to his own advancement in some way or other, professes a thing in which he does not really believe. Now, Vampi believed. He was in many respects a child, and he was a child in his belief in those occult arts to which he was devoted. He had this great and rare quality of belief to a most wonderful and comforting extent, and this it was that made him so completely the oracle of the poor people in his neighbourhood. He believed in the advice which he himself gave. He believed in his own drugs, in his herbs, and his corn-plasters. And so, in like manner, he had confidence in the horoscopes which he cast, and in those strange house-breaking propensities which, in the parlance adopted by the astrological fraternity, are so freely attributed to the different planets.

That visit of Julius Lethwaite to the philosopher which was described in the last chapter, left Cornelius in a high state of triumph. It was not often that such rapid success followed his labours. It was not often that his predictions were fulfilled in such a remarkable manner as they had been in the case of our cynical friend. It was too often the case that counter-influences would get to work and make his prophecies break down in the most grievous fashion. But here was a case in which he had predicted a great danger, nay, had almost specified it, and had bidden him over whom that danger hung to exercise an especial care and caution, if possible to avert it. And upon this man whom he had thus forewarned, suddenly, and almost immediately after the prediction had been uttered, behold there had fallen heavy losses, and great trouble had come upon him. "It is prodigious," said Cornelius, "and, except for the poor gentleman's own sake, eminently satisfactory." For though our philosopher was an entire believer in his predictions, as has been said, he believed in them and in his art, perhaps, even more fully when those predictions came true than when they did not. For Vampi was human.

"I wonder why I could not tell him the precise nature of what he had to fear, but only that there *was* something. Ah, I shall be able to read more clearly soon, to see more and more distinctly."

It was immediately after Lethwaite had left him that our philosopher fell into this course of reflection. It will be remembered that he had been summoned to attend "the strange lady" in the shop below, but had forgotten all about it in the triumph of the moment. He now remembered that the lady was waiting, and was just leaving the sanctum to attend her, when he encountered the faithful Mr. Smaggsdale on the stairs. He had come up to remind his patron that the lady was getting impatient.

"She said she was to see you particular to-

night, and that you know it," said Mr. Smaggsdale.

"Yes, it's all right. I'm going down now."

"The other party about the elixir of youth was here to-day. She says she's taken one bottle, and that it hasn't done much for her; for that she met an old acquaintance of forty years' standing in the street, and he said, 'Ah, ma'am, you and I both begin to show our years,' and she ain't best pleased."

"Ah, she must have patience, Smagg—she must have patience," said the philosopher, as he descended the stairs.

The strange lady was waiting for him in the shop. She had taken up her accustomed position in the darkest corner that was to be found, and the furthest away from the door. She had even got the stuffed alligator between her and the light, and his shadow fell upon her. She was dressed as usual, her veil was closely folded over her face, and her figure was greatly concealed by the folds of her dark woollen shawl.

She was standing, impatiently tapping the counter, as people do when they are kept waiting, and when Cornelius at length appeared, she seemed to reproach him for having been so long in coming to her. Then the usual transaction took place between them, she handing to him something wrapped in paper, and he retiring to the back shop, and reappearing with a similar package, which he handed to her with a bow, and addressing to her some words, spoken in an under tone.

"And now, madam," he added, aloud, "if you'll follow me, I'll show you the way to my observatory, where we can talk of matters of a more spiritual sort." And so saying, he led the way to where there was a division in the counter, and lifting a portion of it which moved upon hinges, he made way for the lady to pass behind. Then he opened the door at the back, which gave access to the staircase, and they both ascended together.

The lady had to pause more than once on the way up, and when she at length reached the sanctum, was very much out of breath.

"You are in weak health," said the philosopher, speaking gently to her. "Those stairs ought not to have distressed you so much. Look at me!" And he stood before her as calm and unmoved as if he had just risen from an easy-chair, and his breath came as quietly as that of a sleeping child.

"Ah, you are used to it," said the lady; and she began to look about the strange place, and to examine it with an appearance of curiosity.

"What a curious room," she said, as she warmed her hands at the stove. "It is like the laboratory of some alchemist. Do you seek for the philosopher's stone?"

"No, madam. I do no such mad thing as that," replied our herbalist. It was a curious thing in his character that he would have nothing to say to alchemy, and, indeed, treated its pretensions with contempt.

He had seated himself by this time in his accustomed place, and got out his papers and instruments, and with these he busied himself for a while, muttering all sorts of incoherent words from time to time, and writing down a great many unintelligible and cabalistic signs upon paper. He referred, too, to different calendars, and other documents already written out on parchment, and to some papers covered with strange signs and drawings, figures of animals, birds and fishes, extraordinary combinations of circles one within another, mathematical figures, and numbers without end. Over these he pored for a long time, appearing to be exceedingly puzzled and perplexed by his studies. At last he pushed up his spectacles upon his forehead, and, heaving a deep sigh, which was a very unusual proceeding with him, leaned back in his chair and fixed his eyes upon his companion.

"I have never had such difficulty with anything," he said, after a while, "as with the attempt to read your future. Ever since you gave me the first necessary particulars, I have been trying to arrive at some certain conclusion, and have been unable to do so. Are you sure that the year, day, and hour of your birth were given me accurately? The slightest mistake would throw everything out."

"They were accurate," answered the lady. "I can answer for them."

"It is so strange," continued Cornelius. "I can go a certain distance. I have told you, as you admit, particulars connected with your girlhood and subsequent life up to this time—particulars which I could only know by means of my art."

"They were all correct," said the lady; "though, I thought, somewhat vague."

"Vague!" repeated the astrologer. "What would you have? 'De minimis non curat lex;' and, in like manner, you would not have the sublime science of astrology become a thing of trivial detail. It condescends not to small matters. It gives forth its hints in mystic language—a language intelligible only to the adept."

"And, as I understand you," replied the lady, "even the adept is now puzzled; and my destiny is revealed in characters which even the initiated cannot decipher! How is that?"

"There were stormy influences at work, madam, at the time of your birth," said the philosopher, evading, for a time, the lady's question; "and, as I have had the honour of submitting to you, those influences were sure to have power over your whole life."

"And how about its termination?" asked the strange lady, abruptly, and with a certain tremor in her voice.

"Of that, at present, I know nothing."

"At present; and when are you likely to know more?"

"Whenever I am able to see more clearly than I can do at present."

"And when is that likely to be?"

"That, madam, I cannot say," answered the astrologer.

These words were followed by a silence of some duration. The astrologer seemed to be occupied in pondering over something that he wished to say. He referred again to his papers; and then he held his head in his hands, and with closed eyes and a puckered brow seemed to be engaged in straining that spiritual sight, which, when we seek to use, we mechanically suspend the action of our bodily eyes, as if the mental sight and the corporeal could not be exercised simultaneously.

"It seems," said the astrologer, speaking slowly, in a low key, and without altering his position or opening his eyes—"it seems as if I had embarked on a journey, had pursued it a certain distance—a considerable distance, even—as if the road, winding through obscure valleys sometimes, and sometimes over rugged by-paths and ill-defined ways, had reached at last a place where it was no longer marked at all, and beyond which I seek in vain to pursue it. I have come to the edge of some steep declivity, down which I look in vain for the track which I have lost, and all beyond is darkness. I have had no such experience before. I have seen things vaguely before. I have seen shapes and forms of which I could make no certain thing, and then beyond I have again seen clearly. But now I can see nothing at all. I use all the skill I know, and endeavour, with all the resources I have at command, to throw some light forward into this dark abyss. A barrier seems to erect itself even now as I gaze between me and the future. The stars throw no light here—not even an uncertain one—and all is darkness!"

Again there was silence. The astrologer's eyes were closed no longer now, and he seemed as one who had woke up from some trance.

"You own yourself defeated?" asked the strange lady.

"For the time I do," answered Cornelius. "It may be that I am not just now in good health. It may be that my eyes are wearied with straining into darkness; and that hereafter my mental vision may become clearer. At present, I can see nothing."

"Then, there is nothing that need detain me longer?" asked the lady.

"Nothing—except that I have a favour to ask of you," answered Cornelius. "I feel—it may be a fancy—but I feel as if I could engage in this work with more confidence if—"

"If what?"

"If you would let me see your face."

The lady answered not a word, but raised her veil, and, putting it back, stood before the astrologer motionless as a statue.

Cornelius looked long and earnestly at her. "Thank you," he said very gently, "that is enough." And he took the lamp to light her down the stairs. "If you could come again very shortly," he said, "I might know more—to-morrow, perhaps, or the day after."

"It shall be the day after," said the strange lady.

"The day after to-morrow, then," said Vampi.

MILITARY PUNISHMENTS.

As an old non-commissioned officer of twenty-five years' service, I may be allowed to say my say respecting military punishments in the English army. I have gone through the ordeal of barrack-room life, and know what it is to be punished as well as rewarded in the army. Nor am I ignorant as to what produces the more serious crimes we read of being committed in the army. When Major de Vere was murdered the other day, there was hardly a man or woman in all England that was not horrified at reading the details of this fearful crime in the papers. In common justice to the soldiers of the army, I must say that the indignation of the rank and file throughout the empire was quite equal to that of any other class. In every regiment, every troop, and every company, the fearful crime which Currie had committed was loudly expressed and sincerely felt by the soldiers of even the humblest rank. It cannot be denied that every corps in the service contains many thoughtless, careless, drunken, and vicious men. Considering the class from which our army is chiefly recruited, this cannot be wondered at. But it is one thing to be a loose, or even bad, soldier, and another to be a murderer. Men may grumble at the discipline of the regiment; complain of the never ending routine of duty; be annoyed, and even angry, at the way in which they are occasionally spoken to by some few officers, who seem to think that it is impossible to maintain their power over men unless they address them like dogs. But to dip one's hands in blood—to murder an officer coolly and deliberately as private Currie did in Brompton barracks—is a crime of which, thank God, there are but very few men even amongst the very worst of our worst soldiers would contemplate for a moment.

Still it cannot be denied but that the serious military offence of striking non-commissioned officers, and even occasionally of attempting the lives of superiors, is becoming more common than it was in the English army. Formerly, even the comparatively trivial offence of wilful direct disobedience of orders was rare in the service, but now it is daily getting more prevalent. Bad conduct in a regiment, troop, or company, does not, however, spread like the cattle disease in a herd of bullocks. When soldiers have passed through their drill, they generally take their stand for good or bad amongst their companions. In every barrack-room there are the really good soldiers who take a pride in their work, and like to be as smart as possible in their duty. Then, again, there are what I may call the medium soldiers, men who are neither very good nor extremely bad; and who get over their work with a certain amount of grumbling,

although they still do get through it. Lastly, there are the men who are altogether bad, whose names are seldom out of the defaulters' book, and who, whenever they have a little money in their pockets, invariably get drunk. Of these there is a degree worse still: the sullen bad violent men: soldiers who have, or believe themselves to have, a grievance against the whole army in general, and against their own officers in particular. These are few in number, but it is from among the few that our military prisons are filled, and, when serious crime is committed, the criminals are always from the ranks of this particular class.

How is it that, with so few incentives to bad behaviour, and so many inducements to good conduct, there are soldiers given to violent crimes? I attribute most of this evil to the military punishments we have in the English army. When a soldier commits himself seriously, for the first time even, his punishment is invariably one which so degrades him, in the eyes of both himself and his comrades, that he does not care, and does not try, ever to redeem his character. And when he advances in crime—when he gets so hardened as almost to glory in the very shame of what he knows to be wrong—the penalty he has to pay for his offences serves to strengthen still more his evil resolves, and causes him to walk, as it were, in military disgrace for the rest of his days.

Let me relate a case in point. I have served in several regiments. One of them was a very crack hussar regiment, which was stationed for twelve months and more at Hounslow, near London. I was troop sergeant-major of E troop in that corps. In the same troop was a young fellow named Vincent, who had enlisted about a year previously, when we were quartered at Manchester. Vincent was a fine young soldier, and a good-hearted lad as ever lived. For more than twelve months after he joined us, that man was never reported even to a sergeant, far less to his captain or the colonel. But soon after we got to Hounslow, Vincent became entangled with a young woman, who was certainly a great deal worse than she ought to have been. More than once, he came home at night very drunk; but the sergeant of his squad was a good-hearted man, and as the lad always went to bed quiet enough, he managed never to report him. I often gave the young man a little private advice to shake off his female companion, to keep closer to his duty, and more clear of drink; but it was of no use. At last, one day when the trumpet sounded for "stables" at eleven o'clock, Vincent was so drunk that the orderly sergeant of his troop was obliged to send him to the guard-room. Next day he was brought up to the orderly-room. Our old colonel, who was a most kind-hearted, though a very strict officer, happened to be away on a fortnight's leave, and the prisoners were taken before the major: a very young man for the rank he held, and who never could open his mouth to a soldier without an oath or a word of abuse.

Like some other officers in the English army, he thought that this detestable habit showed signs of manliness and officer-like qualities. When Vincent was brought up before him, he had not long held the rank of major, and this was the first time he had ever presided at the orderly-room. No sooner had the complaint against the prisoner, "drunk at stables," been read out by the adjutant, than the major opened a torrent of abuse against him, which so taunted Vincent that he was mad enough to reply to the major in the most insolent manner. As a soldier, I could but condemn the man's act, though, as a man, I am bound to confess that, under similar circumstances, I should, in all probability, have done the same. The major ordered him to be tried by a regimental court-martial for "being drunk at stables," and for "insolent and insubordinate conduct to his superior officer." The court sat the same forenoon; the prisoner, who by this time had had leisure to repent and recollect himself, pleaded "guilty." He was sentenced to receive fifty lashes, and to be imprisoned in the cells for twenty-eight days. He was flogged that afternoon before the whole regiment, and, when he went into the cells, his hair was, by order of the major, clipped so very close that he looked like an escaped convict. When his term of imprisonment was over, he joined the troop again, but he was an altered man. No evil spirit had been flogged out of him, but seven spirits more, worse than the first, had been flogged into him. A more utterly useless, worthless soldier I never saw. If he had a shilling in his pocket, and an hour's leave into town, he managed to return drunk. He lived in the cells and the guard-room, much more than in the barrack-room. At last the quantity of spirits and beer he drank, had such an effect upon him, that he really was seldom quite sober. One day, not drunk, but half muddled with drink, he turned out very dirty for a foot parade in Island Bridge Barracks, Dublin. The orderly-sergeant of his troop reproved him, and sent him to his room to brush his clothes, hair, and boots. The sergeant was not in the least to blame. But the wretched man, hardly knowing what he did, rushed at the sergeant, and, before he could be hindered, struck him two heavy blows in the face. He was overpowered in an instant, and sent to the guard-room, from which he only issued to be tried by a general court-martial, by which he was condemned to ten years' penal servitude. He is now working out his time at Portland. I am quite sure that, if at the commencement of his folly this Vincent had met with kind but firm treatment, he would have reformed, and would have risen to be a good soldier. He was one of the handsomest young fellows I ever saw, and, when mounted, was the picture of an English hussar. I went to see him on the day when he was sent up to London to be made over to the civil power; and he told me that the lash had caused him to form a deep-seated resolution never to behave well again, and always to give as much trouble as he possibly could.

I am not only quite sure that no soldier was ever reformed by the lash—that not only have good men become bad after its infliction, and that no bad man ever became good after being flogged—but I am also equally convinced that the sight of this punishment is very far indeed from being a wholesome example. The non-commissioned officers of a regiment hear and see a very great deal of which the commissioned officers are in utter ignorance. In the English army there are so very few officers who have been promoted from the ranks, that between the officers' and sergeants' mess-rooms there is a gulf which it is almost impossible to span. However well meaning and professionally zealous an officer may be, he knows nothing whatever of the feelings or the opinions—the prejudices, if you like—of the men he commands. There is an idea among officers that the example of the lash is good, and will deter many from evil. I know as a fact that the exact contrary is the case. I never yet heard even the best-behaved soldiers say among themselves that any man condemned to be flogged had deserved his sentence. But I have heard, not once, twice, nor a dozen times during my long term of service, but every time a soldier was tied up to the triangles, no matter how great a scoundrel he had been—no matter even if he had robbed his room-mates, which, in the soldier's code of laws and morality, is the greatest crime of which a man can be guilty—I have invariably heard his comrades, from the moment of his being condemned to be flogged, regard him as an object of the deepest pity.

But the lash is not the only punishment we have, which degrades a soldier to such an extent that he feels himself lost. When a man deserts, after he is caught he is very frequently (almost invariably) sentenced to be branded on the shoulder or back with the letter D. When I first joined the —th Light Dragoons (since transformed, as all light dragoon regiments have been, into the —th Hussars), the corporal of my squad was as gentlemanly a young man as you would wish to see. It was rare to meet with a young fellow of such good address and correct manners in the ranks of the English army. His father was a poor clergyman, and had not the means to buy him a commission, and so the lad enlisted into a cavalry regiment. He had a brother-in-law in London who was well-to-do in the world, and he obtained permission to spend ten days at Christmas (the regiment was then stationed in Dublin) with his relatives in the metropolis. The Christmas dinner was good, the wine was better, and one invitation to dinner followed another from the friends he met at his relative's. Whether he forgot his leave, or whether he got too much "on the spree," he over-stayed his leave by seven days—at the end of that time, returning to the Royal Barracks in Dublin, where he reported himself, and was put under arrest. He wrote out a statement, and showed how, though he had been guilty of over-staying his leave, he never for a moment intended to desert. But the colonel

thought otherwise. This was not the kind-hearted old gentleman who commanded us some six years later, but a gentleman who had very recently exchanged into our regiment from half-pay unattached. He ordered the corporal to be tried by a garrison court-martial, and this tribunal sentenced him to be imprisoned for three months, and to be "branded with the letter D in the usual manner," besides being reduced from the rank of corporal to that of a private dragoon. The sentence was carried out, and the unfortunate man never held up his head again. To drown care, he took to drinking, and in two years died of delirium tremens in the Belburt Hospital, after having spent more days in, than out of, the regimental cells, and being tried more than once by a regimental court-martial for intoxication.

It is not of the actual severity of the punishments in the service that I or any soldier need complain. It is not a less severe but a less degrading code that is required in the army. There is hardly any punishment we have, which does not carry degradation with it to a certain extent. Thus, if a soldier is for some comparatively trivial offence ordered to be confined seven days in the cells, it is generally made a point to order his hair to be clipped so short, that for six weeks or two months after his punishment, he looks like a ticket-of-leave man just got free from jail. His punishment is ordered for, say a month, but it hangs about him for four or five months, as during all that time he is ashamed to uncover his head, and will not enter any public place where he would have to take his cap off, lest the shortness of his hair be observed and laughed at. In many of our large garrison towns side-locks are sold, which the soldier who has had his hair clipped close to his head on entering the cells, purchases, and attaches to the sides of his cap.

Another source of much crime in our army is the way in which some—not all, but still too many—officers address their men. It does not proceed from any wilful intention of hurting the feelings of the men so addressed, but from a silly idea that it denotes an officer-like bearing, and a strict disciplinarian. I have seen mere lads of seventeen or eighteen, who were yet under the hands of the riding-master and adjutant, speak to old soldiers who wore the Crimean and Indian medals on their breasts, as if they were really inferior beings to themselves. It is not so much *what* these commissioned youths say, as the *way in which they say it*. The fault is very seldom to be found among titled officers or men of undoubted good breeding. For, a true gentleman always respects the feelings of others, in the army as elsewhere.

My own experience in the army does not teach me that officers who have risen from the ranks, speak roughly, or behave ill to soldiers under their command. I have often seen it stated that they do, both in parliament and elsewhere, but I have never found it so.

The young men who join direct from home—the officers who merely go through an examina-

tion at Chelsea, and then are sent to learn their duties in the regiment, to which they should come to teach, and not have to be taught—often make the greatest possible blunders, and know nothing whatever of true work for at least two years after they have been receiving the Queen's pay and wearing the Queen's uniform. And these are almost invariably the very men who speak to soldiers in the harshest terms. I remember well a case of this sort a few years ago. In the regiment to which I belonged, there was a young cornet who had but lately joined, and who was, perhaps, as awkward a specimen of unfledged humanity as ever put on uniform. He had been months in the riding-school, but the riding-master could make nothing of him, and when at foot drill he was the despair of every instructor. At field-days he was quiet and civil-spoken, for he was in such mortal dread of his charger, that all his attention was given to keeping himself from falling off; but, at dismounted parades, he bullied the men of his troop whenever he had a chance: that is, whenever the captain was absent, and he commanded in his place. There was in the troop, a man called Benson—Bill Benson. Bill was one of the best riders in the British cavalry, and as fine a specimen of an English dragoon as ever was seen. He had been twenty-five years in the army, but had never been promoted; for he could barely read, and writing even his own name was, to poor Bill, as the unknown tongues. He had served in the Crimea, ridden in the famous Balaklava charge, and, when his regiment came home from Sebastopol, had volunteered to go out to India with a regiment ordered to that country at the time of the mutiny. Bill had two English medals as well as that given by Turkey for the Crimea upon his jacket, wore three good-conduct marks on his sleeve, and was looked upon as a pattern soldier. For some reason or other, the young cornet took a great dislike to Benson, and used to "naggle" him whenever he got a chance. There was a foot parade one afternoon, and, in his captain's absence, the cornet commanded the troop. In passing down the ranks, he thought he saw, or he pretended that he thought he saw, a spot of dirt upon Benson's pouch-belt, and asked him in the most bullying tone possible, "Why the devil he appeared on parade so dirty?" Now, to call Bill Benson dirty, was something like accusing Coutts's or Glynn's of being insolvent. Benson coloured, and replied respectfully enough that he had not seen the spot of dirt: which, by the way, was behind his shoulder, and not so big, after all, as the size of a large pin's head. The cornet told him to "hold his d——d tongue, and not to answer." Bill replied again, "I thought you asked me a question, sir." The man standing next to Bill began to titter at this, and the cornet ordered both men to the guard-room, where they were confined all night. In the morning, they were brought up before the commanding officer, charged with insolent conduct in the ranks. The colonel was a good officer and a man of judgment; he at

once saw the folly of which the cornet had been guilty, but he was obliged to uphold the authority of that officer. The latter magnified the offence as much as possible, and, to make a long story short, the colonel ordered Benson to be confined in the cells for seven days. The sentence was carried out, for, although the colonel gave the cornet several broad hints to beg the man off, he would not take them. From that day forward, Bill became one of the most careless soldiers in the regiment, and was never out of the defaulters' list. He took to drinking, lost his good-conduct marks, and was discharged about two years afterwards with a pension of threepence a day less than he would have had if the cornet had never got him into trouble. I don't defend his conduct for answering an officer in the ranks. I am too old a soldier for that. But I maintain that Bill's punishment was brought about quite as much by the irritating language of the cornet as by any fault of his own.

When I read in the papers how difficult it is now-a-days to induce men to enlist, or how many men take their discharge after their ten years are over, I am often tempted to take up my pen, and tell the Secretary at War, or his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, some of my experiences. For stealing, repeated disobedience of orders, insolence to a superior, and such crimes, dismiss a soldier publicly and with great ignominy; if a man be careless, slothful, unwilling to do his duty, turn him out of the regiment shamefully; increase the pension a soldier can earn, to a shilling a day after fifteen years' service, and a penny a day for every subsequent year he is in the ranks; reduce the term of enlistment from ten years to seven; let every year in India, the West Indies, or any other bad climate, count as double time towards pension; do all this, and the country will never want recruits for the army, nor will many good soldiers leave the service after their first term of service is over.

The non-commissioned officers, in their way of addressing their men, are often as much to be blamed as the officers; and yet if they did otherwise, they would be set down by their superiors as wanting in smartness, and perhaps would never rise to higher rank. This is, however, the one great aim of many amongst the non-commissioned ranks, and is the cause of an immense deal of evil in the service. I have repeatedly heard corporals and sergeants speak to the men—or to some particular man upon whom, in the language of the barrack-room, they are “down”—in a manner that would not be tolerated in the humblest employment of civil life.

That the punishments of our army should be severe, I have already expressed my opinion; but I hold that they ought not to be so vexing to the men, nor so degrading as many of them now are. Even if a soldier has taken a glass too much, but is not on duty, and, when he returns to barracks, goes to bed quietly, why interfere with him? I have seen in some infantry regiments—in cavalry corps they are not so fidgety

—an orderly corporal of each company at the barrack-gate, stationed there to observe and mark down the names of any men who returned in the least the worse for liquor. Very often the man was just drunk enough to be quarrelsome if meddled with; and, before he was captured, he would, perhaps, knock down the men of the guard, and use language the reverse of complimentary to his superiors in general, and the sergeant of the guard in particular. Here there would be a clear case for a court-martial; and the soldier would be sentenced to three or four months' imprisonment, and loss of any good-conduct marks he might have obtained in the service.

Extra drill, extra riding-school, and such-like punishments, should never be resorted to when it is possible to avoid them. Because the invariable effect of these is to make a soldier hate what he should take a pride in. I don't think we have any mode of punishment so good as what I have heard described in the French army as the *salle de police*. This is simply a place of detention, to which a soldier is ordered for one, two, three, or any number of days up to a month. The prisoners are kept together during a part of the day, but are not allowed to speak one to another. For refractory men I would have solitary cells, in which they might be confined at the discretion of the commanding officer, from one to fifteen days. If that did not bring them to their senses, it would be far cheaper to dismiss than to keep them. Our cumbersome machinery of military prisons I would abolish. They cost a very great deal, and do very little good. In these establishments the men are exercised at what is called shot drill—that is, a man has, in company with half a dozen or more of his fellow-prisoners, to lift and carry shot, by word of command, from one socket to another in the same square. The continual stooping, lifting the shot, stopping again to deposit it, facing about, marching a few steps, and then stooping again to renew the process, goes on for two hours at a time, with two out of fifteen minutes to rest. The drill takes place three times a day, and is so severe, that the men are perfect cripples for the first week or two, owing to the most intense agony from racking pains in the loins, legs, arms, and chest. The punishment is too severe for military offences, and not severe enough for deliberate crime. I have known many men ruined in health for the rest of their lives by five or six months of this work; but I never yet knew a soldier reformed by his sojourn in one of our military prisons. For the money these cost, or for less, I believe we might establish, in Canada or elsewhere, a regiment to which soldiers should be sent for the purpose of reforming them: thus giving them a chance of recovering themselves apart from their former comrades.

A great mistake is made in supposing that a soldier when off duty must at all times be perpetually steady, always sober, even staid. There are young men in our ranks, just as there are in the navy, or among any set of men. If

in a large garrison town, like Chatham, Portsmouth, Dublin, or Plymouth, or near the camps of Aldershot or the Curragh, half a dozen drunken soldiers are seen every night, civilians exclaim against the army, and cry what a drunken lot we are. But they might see four times the number of artisans or navvies the worse for liquor, and not say a word. Not two months ago, I happened to be standing at the Great Eastern Railway station in London when the train arrived from Colchester, and out of it got an infantry soldier, who, although quite able to look after himself, was certainly by no means sober. In five minutes he was surrounded by a score or more of people, looking, as he told them, "as if they never had seen a poor fellow the worse for liquor before." He found his way to a cab, and made off. Half an hour later, an excursion-train arrived, filled with a number of Foresters, or Odd Fellows, or other beings wearing aprons, badges, paper bands round their caps, and all the paraphernalia which free-born Britons are wont to parade on such occasions. Of the "Ancient Order" there present, I saw some two score in all the various stages of intoxication, from "slightly screwed" up to very drunk. But no one seemed to think it at all extraordinary that working men, when out on a very hot day, and for their one annual holiday, should take a little too much; though they had stared at the poor soldier with all their eyes, and made very frequent allusions to "those drunken fellows in the army." The same spirit prevails in our military rules and regulations, as well as in the Mutiny Act. They all appear to think that a soldier should, in his conduct, be little below an angel, and that the slightest failure in the path of duty should be visited with the utmost severity.

THE FENIANS.

WE have to go very far back to discover anything about the true Fenians, who were a very different class of heroes from those who have been recently trying to revolutionise Ireland, and whose head-office must surely be in some Dublin Tooley-street. Some fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago, Ireland was distracted by the battles of two enormous clans, who represented both halves of it pretty fairly—the Clan Boissne, which included the Leinster and Munster warriors, and the Clan Morna, those of the north. Morna sets us thinking of Ossian; and, indeed, the whole of that poem is strongly tinged with Fenian colouring and manners. In these disturbances, figured Con of the Hundred Battles, Art the Melancholy, Cumhail (pronounced cool), and other poetically-named chiefs. The struggle was carried on by an enrolled standing army massed over the country in regular battalions, and called the Fionians. Fionians would be, therefore, a more correct representative of the Irish word than Fenians. "Cool," the father of "Fin," was killed in battle by a general called Goll, but

who had a more showy name in "The Son of Morna," who was succeeded by young Fion, who became the famous Finn Mac-Cool.

Such a leader would have been invaluable at the present crisis. The origin is easily explained. He watched seven years at the Boyne for the Salmon of Knowledge, and when he had caught that invaluable fish (now-a-days the Fenian salmon are in deserved repute), his patience was rewarded by being appointed leader of the Fenians. Never was a simple act—in itself its own reward—so handsomely recompensed. Epicures might certainly wait seven days for a "cut" of Boyne salmon.

The strange body of men over which this youth was called to rule, were surprisingly disciplined. They are the men who wore those elegant and exquisite golden ornaments that are dug up now and again. Their proceedings were as chivalrous as King Arthur's court. The whole picture of those days, as displayed in the Irish poems and romances of the Ossianic period, are so rich in the colour of the figures, the dresses, decorations, actions, and exploits—so entertaining and amusing—that it is quite surprising they should not have attracted more attention from the general reader. The postulant was obliged to have certain physical qualifications, and "pass" satisfactorily in the following branches: He had to parry nine javelins *thrown at once*, with only a hazel stick. He had to run at full speed through a wood, and tie his hair up so as it should not come down. He was to run under a stick as low as his knee, and jump over a stick as high as his chin, while pursued at full speed by the examiners. He had to tread on a rotten stick without breaking it, and to pull a thorn out of his foot when running. He had to be musical, to write verses, and to recite poetry. He had to take an oath to relieve the poor, and never to offer an insult to a woman. Nothing more chivalrous than the Fenian behaviour to the "fair sex" can be conceived. Anything a lady ordered her lover to do, must be done—such as leaping across a fatal chasm. Finn was once required, by a lady he admired, to jump over a pillar as high as his own chin, with another pillar of the same height in the palm of his hand. He succeeded; but, in a private conversation with his father-in-law, he afterwards owned that it was the most ticklish thing he had ever attempted.

A Fenian had great privileges, as indeed such an accomplished fellow deserved to have. He was at free quarters wherever he went. Salmon, deer, and game of all sorts, were kept strictly for hunting and shooting. If a common fellow killed a stag, he had to replace it by an ox, and was well off if he did not fare worse. The Fenian knights had all sorts of accomplishments, were fond of playing chess, kept paid bards to sing to them, and could do feats (or some of them could) that rivalled professors at Fracconi's. We all have seen the gentleman with the symmetrical legs and fleshings, and with the silver fillet about his head, who keeps his footing on a large globe as it rolls down an inclined

plane. It is sometimes happily called a "star feat," and the professor himself "a daring equilibrist." But Diarmid was before him by at least fifteen hundred centuries, and went up a hill and down again, on a large tun of wine, to the amazement of a sort of open-air circus. A conceited young man, who thought he could do the same feat, and was invited into the ring to do it, was crushed under the barrel.

They seem to have been sumptuously appointed, and to have lived magnificently—feasting, drinking, and fighting. "Tell me," said Conan, an Irish gentleman, at whose house Fion was on a visit, "what are the sweetest strains you ever enjoyed?" Fion answered him in a song that breathes the spirit of poetry:

"When the seven battalions of Fenians assemble on our plain, and raise their standards over their heads; when the howling whistling blast of the dry cold wind rushes through them and over, *that is very sweet to me*. When the drinking hall is set out in Almin, and the cup-bearers hand the bright cups of chaste workmanship to the chiefs of the Fenians, the ring of the cups on the tables, when drained to the last drop, *that is very sweet to me*. Sweet to me is the scream of the seagull and of the heron, the roar of the waves on Tralee, the song of the three sons of Meardha, the whistle of Macluagh, and the voice of the cuckoo in the first months of summer." A couple of centuries later, we find the Fenians in possession of a code of laws more minute than, and quite as philosophical as, those of Justinian, illustrated by commentaries, glossary, and interpretations, divided into elaborate systems of the law of restraint, and debtor and creditor, of "fosterage," &c.*

Of a very, very different pattern are the modern gentry who take to themselves the name of those Ossianic heroes. I wander through the city where the Fenian "centres" are supposed to exist in great force. I see the walls covered with great placards, headed ominously:



A PROCLAMATION!

WOODHOUSE.

Whereas, &c. (to an unlimited extent of what lawyers call "recitals").

And whereas (more "reciting").

Now we, the Lord-Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland, do hereby, &c.

Given at our Council Chamber, Dublin Castle.

Round these awful documents little crowds are gathered, who read and pass on: some with that curious and significant gesture of lifting the "caubeen" a little to one side from the back, to allow of a kind of puzzled scratch of the head, and leaving the caubeen in that position. Some go their way with a muttered "Be-

* See the curious portion of the Brehon Laws, just published by the government, and ably and carefully edited by Doctor Hancock. One of the remedies of a creditor against his debtor was "fasting" at his gate until he paid.

dad!" Down Parliament-street, not a hundred yards from "The Castle," there is a gaudy office, ostentatiously painted a bright green, but its shutters are up, and a policeman, like a gendarme, standing at the door. This is the "IRISH PEOPLE" office, sacked and rummaged only the other night. There is a great deal of newspaper reading, and "sensation" advertisements, and a little dramatic incident or two. Here is a specimen. For as I enter a large house of business, employing some five or six hundred clerks and workmen of all grades, two very gigantic gentlemen, with heavy walking-sticks, bearded and moustachioed, and looking so uncomfortable in their costume—intended to represent easy affluence in the shopkeeping class—that they seem to be theatrical, and to be coming on in a pantomime. I here request a private interview with the head of the house, and I have no difficulty in identifying them as members of the B division, who are the detectives of the force, and who, for some mysterious sort of detection, *must* be over six feet high. As I go out, I see another gentleman in a new frieze coat, and a heavy oak walking-stick, dressed evidently as his ideal of an opulent country shopkeeper, walking carelessly up and down, looking at the clouds and chimney-pots with an abstracted air; and on the opposite side of the street are two police flâneurs in their *real* dress, crossing each other, and with an overdone air of lounging, and a blasé manner, as though the force was getting a bore. Putting "this and that together," it is evident that there is a Fenian inside, who is about to be "drawn."

My friend, Mr. Malachy, whose exertion in the reformation of the drama has been described not very far back,* has, I see, seized on the popular thought, and, with an aptitude which is his characteristic, has embodied it in a grand national drama. One would have thought that Harry Munro, whom he happily described as "that Renowned Son of Momus," and as "the King of Comedians," would alone have been a sufficient attraction. But Malachy is never contented by the meagre and exact measure of duty. He goes beyond it, and has announced a real national drama on the grand stirring subject of "ROBERT EMMETT," with such characters as the ill-fated LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD, the CHIEF JUSTICE, and a savage SERJEANT, and various other important characters of that exciting period. It is remarkable, however, that this drama should have been suddenly withdrawn, owing, no doubt, to that reign of terror which now obtains in the unhappy city. But Mr. Malachy, with that readiness of resource which, I must again remark, those that share in his private friendship have noticed as a special feature in his character, has compassed the same end by substituting the story of the unhappy "WALLACE, THE HERO OF SCOTLAND," whose sentiments and misfortunes a quick-witted audience would know how to apply.

* See No. 337.

Although England and Ireland are called the "United Kingdom" as regards laws, yet the statutes of the two countries run very often in opposite streams. In the Irish statute-books are some acts, kept, as it were, hung up in the dark armouries of the Castle like old muskets—a little rusty, perhaps, but still serviceable. In virtue of some of these, policemen can with perfect legality make a "domiciliary visit" at night, burst in upon a newspaper office, seize editor, writers, printers, type, presses, and paper, and "cart" them all away: the men to prison, the presses and matériel to the dungeons or cellars of the mysterious Castle.

Having secured a copy of the "seized" journal, which has acquired a kind of spurious value, like everything supposed not to be procured for "love or money," I turn it over to see if there are any marks and tokens of special sedition about it. But it is, on the whole, harmless enough, though amusing. First, for the advertisements.

A Mr. Archdeacon is at present in a cell, overtaken by justice, and it is a commentary on the proverbial uncertainty of human affairs to read his hopeful announcement of starting in business only a few days before his misfortune overtook him. He had experience, he said, both in this country and the United States, of which he was a citizen. "Archdeacon has *already* in stock," he goes on, "the National Works published by James Corrigan, consisting of Mitchell's Jail Journal Recollections of John Mitchell; Spirit of the Nation; Memoirs of Tone; Women of Ireland; Anecdotes of O'Connell and Shamus O'Brien; together with a few copies of the Priest Hunter."

There seems to have been some ungenerous behaviour as to "O'DONNELL-ABOO," which is a song considered important enough to infringe the laws of copyright in its behalf. For our IRISH PEOPLE does not disdain to invoke the Saxon's vile laws when they can be found useful. It remonstrates: "The song known as O'DONNELL-ABOO has *never yet been published free from error*." Was there ever so unlucky a song? "But it is now in course of preparation under the author's superintendence, and will be ready immediately, with a *portrait of the author, and his autograph authorisation*. It will be brought out in the best style, with the music and correct words, and a *beautiful* title-page. CAUTION.—The version of O'DONNELL-ABOO published by Messrs. Murray is incorrect, and has been published not only without my permission, but in defiance of my remonstrances. All authorised and correct copies are signed by the author, Mr. J. McCann, author of O'DONNELL-ABOO."

I find another advertisement, the programme of "a grand national miscellaneous concert, for a distressed mechanic"—in which the splendid brass band of St. James was to perform "The War Galop," "The Brian Boroihme March," and the irrepressible "O'DONNELL-ABOO March;" besides the following attractions; a prologue, "written expressly for this occasion," by Mr. J. D. O'Loughlin; an "opening chorus," by

the Maryland minstrels; the great barytone, Mr. M. Walsh; a comic song, called "The Late Elections;" and Mr. John Hamon, the "favourite tenor," in some "choice selections from Moore." In the second part, Mr. JAMES DE RAYMOND COYNE was to sing, "in character," The Pilgrims; Mr. J. D. O'Loughlin "was to give" a recitation composed by himself, entitled "The American Child to his Irish Father;" and Mr. Nicholson was to recite "Robert Emmett's last speech." "An efficient spring (sic) band" was to be in attendance.

In the "body" of the paper, there is a fair sprinkling of general news of interest; but the journal seems to have adopted a rather novel idea in the shape of its opinions—for these were conveyed through a large correspondence from all parts of the country, supposed to be addressed to the journal, but really manufactured in the office. Every one is pouring in his or her suggestions, complaints, and advice, and this gives the idea of vast circulation and great public interest. But what seems to cut the editor to the quick, and naturally so, are dismal accounts from genuine correspondents and agents of the sale of the paper being interfered with by the commands and influence of the Catholic clergy. Howbeit, he protests—and, like Desdemona, almost too much—that this has the effect of doubling his circulation, and that he devoutly hopes the clergy will redouble their efforts. Herein, it is easily seen that he is not speaking from his heart.

There is a long article on Infantry and Cavalry, showing how the Scots beat the English at Bannockburn with lances, "which, as our readers are aware, is only a modification of the pike." The same was the effect at Trichinopoly, where the British were terribly cut up. There was the same result when the French engaged the Mamelukes—those matchless horsemen not being able to break the squares. The moral inculcated by OLLAM FODTELA, the writer of this military essay, is, that pikes would still be useful. But he has, unhappily and unfairly, left out all reference to the Enfield-rifle element. The inadequate pay of the police is then dwelt upon; but "still there are brave Irishmen in the police who would die for their country, and meet its foes, as we trust they shall, upon the glorious battle-fields of freedom." At a social meeting in Quarryville, Ulster, New York, Mr. Clark, "a centre," arrived to organise a "circle," when the "ladies, both young and old—God bless them!—did nobly encore the greeting of the men of Quarryville, so that those on the side walk, taking up the applause, in unison with those on the inside, *made the welkin ring at Mr. Hugh Bradley's Hotel*." Again, with straightforwardness and candour, the IRISH PEOPLE copies a whole article, which very vigorously refutes all its doctrines, and which winds up with the remark: "We look at the Fenians in the same way that a naturalist examines a colony of fleas; very interesting, no doubt; but, then, we need not go too near them." The editor dismisses it with this comment: "We

have only to reply to this logical and gentlemanly production, that, if we frequently use polysyllables, we mostly know the meaning of them."

Leaving the seat of this ill-fated journal, I go a little further, down a lane beside the Exchange, where there is a narrow court, in which is the police-office. Here, the two black vans are waiting; and here, a great crowd is gathered, and a very curious crowd: not so much the usual unclean miscellany who wait every day, after the "night charges" are disposed of, to "see off" their friends who are in trouble, but a far more respectable class, with visible suspense and anxiety written on their faces—a kind of bewilderment that is very characteristic. It is easy to see that these are some of the "brotherhood," who are stunned by the suddenness of the blow that has fallen, and who are in a little doubt where the next blow may fall, and are drawn by a sort of fascination to this spot. A sight more deserving of compassion is a gathering of women—sisters, wives, and mothers—with faithful wistful faces, with most agonising expressions—women, whose foolish "Pat" or "Andy" is inside, and who has been wakened from his childish dream of "uniforms, independence, circles," and what not, to the cold reality of a dirty cell and prison diet. As a string of these "state prisoners" is led out, it is almost amusing to see in some the faint attempt at carrying themselves with a political martyr air; but the one who is pointed out as the editor of the sacked newspaper, and the promoter of all the mischief, seems to have a very hang-dog air indeed. The poor faithful women press forward with extraordinary energy and passion, with wailings and lamentations, and clasping of hands and prayers, as the black door closes upon each.

Walking through retired streets, before the descent upon the degenerate Fenians of these days, I had met large crowds gathered about ballad-singers of the usual type, but whose minstrelsy was of an unusual sort. The burden of one was something to this effect:

Thin Eyer-ishmin once more strike home,
And fight with heart and hand;
March to the battle's front agin,
And strike for fatherland.

CHORUS—Thin Eyer-ishmin, &c.

Some songs of a more stirring kind enjoyed a yet greater popularity, and "drew" a larger audience:

THE GREEN FLAG FLYING OVER US.

Prepare, prepare with silit care,
And trust to words no longer,
We had enough of such false stuff,
And find we are not the stronger.
Those mountebanks who fill the ranks,
By lying all in thorns,
Of thim beware, and still prepare,
With the Green Flag flying ower us.

In days of yore, whin talkers bore
A sword, like min of valour,
From every fight they led the flight,
With base and coward trallor.

Such wreckless min, by voice and pin,
With ———— cursed and tore us;
We'll strick thim dumb with sife and drum,
With the Green Flag flying ower us.

But the picture of the enrolled host marching to their task was better still:

THE FENIAN MEN.

See they come over the red blossomed heather,
Their green banners waving in the pure mountain air;

Heads erect, eyes to front, stepping proudly together,
Sure freedom sits throned in each proud spirit there.

Their columns twining,

Their blades still shining,

Like sparkles of beauty, they flash from each man.

There is a grim spirit of ironical prophesy in these verses, and they must come back very disagreeably on the patriots now incarcerated in small cells at the local Bridewell especially the ringing line,

Sure freedom sits throned in each proud spirit there!

As usual, the old fondness for the theatricals of rebellion led to detection. Every one must have his "uniform," his arms, his rank, and his commission. There was too much of "drilling" and "head centres." In the year 'forty-eight, when a similar plot was discovered, the chief of the police, an old soldier, received information of the enrolment of numbers of the "assistants" in a large drapery house, and proceeded to the establishment to arrest them. They were called in, one by one. In the mean time their trunks had been searched, and a large number of officers' commissions in the new "rebel army" discovered. The old officer, a man of dry humour, received each with profound courtesy, addressing them by their proper titles. "Very sorry, Colonel Maloney, but must send you away." "Regret so much, General, to put you to this inconvenience, but—" Then to his policeman: "You may remove the General." The poor drapers were more overwhelmed by this ironical reception, and the absurdity of the situation, than by even the discomfiture of their stupid little plot. It is needless to say that this fooling—which, however, was dangerous enough—was passed over, and that the drapers were sent back to their cloth-yards.

It is constantly asked what is the aim, or what has been the aim, of this "movement"—the latest and most unlucky of all the many movements that have disturbed Ireland. There are two nations to which Irish eyes and Irish hearts turn with feelings of strong and affectionate interest. For the peasant, the idea of "the French" seems to embody all that is romantic and splendid; and during the present century the dream of French ships, and even the words "Bantry Bay" and French uniforms, had all the charm of a spell or a poem. No one who has not lived among the peasantry can conceive with what a reverence and sympathy the name of Napoleon has been followed by them; and it is not too much to say that, if the present bearer of that name visited the country for pleasure and curiosity, the enthusiasm with

which he would be met would be something incredible.

The writer of this knows for a fact that, at the time of the escape from Elba, there were districts in the far west where it was celebrated with bonfires and most tumultuous joy—where the hogshead, and, more welcome still, the keg of poteen, was set running—and this, too, in the houses and on the estates of squires holding the king's commissions of the peace. The peasantry are highly poetical as a class, and have quite the taste of the French for military show. Consequently "a uniform" must figure in the proposition for every "rising;" and the gentleman in Mr. Boucicault's play, who is always figuring along the coast, blazing in a French uniform and stars imperfectly concealed in the ample folds of a cloak, is only a type of this fancy of his countrymen.

Again, with every peasant, America is the grand ideal of strength and power and wealth—the Promised Land, the grand republic to which every one will hurry who can. Though there is no romance about it, it is the ideal of invincibility; it is the country of which England is supposed to stand in awe and terror. It is the land from which the heavy reckoning is to come—some day; it is the land from which many friends and countrymen return with great Mexican-looking trunks, studded over with brass bosses, and with coarse golden rings on their middle finger. There is no such objectionable character as this returned Irish-American. The native goes out simple, courteous, intelligent, pious, and with sweetness of manner and address, quite Italian. He comes back familiar, swaggering, "rowdyish," flashing, impudent, and irreligious. In a county close to Dublin, a gentleman of this pattern has been living for a year or so, mystifying neighbours and police. He went out a miserable pauper, and returned with Mexican trunks, and gold rings, and a tuft to his chin. Nothing could be "made" of him. When the news of the arrests came, he had disappeared. But his work was done. It is known that nearly the whole of a militia regiment had become enrolled in the "body."

It is this indistinct idea of American power, and American chastisement for England, that gives the character to the present movement. All through the last war, Irish sympathy went with the Northerners, with the great United States republic, against the South. The preposterous idea of Irish-Americans coming in great American ships, and backed by the great American government, is the background to the whole. The thing has been foolishly underrated, but few Englishmen have a conception of the amount to which the "organisation" has extended. Returned American soldiers, demoralised marauders, have been scattered over Ireland, inflaming the public mind. The figures of these loose "loafers," bearded, dressed in a kind of free-and-easy piratical fashion, with wide-awakes, long skirts, and half coats, have been familiar to many Dublin inhabitants; and magistrates and "squireens," who have mixed much

with the people, have long suspected, and even known, that some secret agitation was at work. Even the old traditions of 'ninety-eight have been diligently evoked, and the story of New Ross, where the raw rebels, with only pikes in their hands, beat the king's troops again and again, has made the round of the country. The poor country peasant or Dublin journeyman tailor has not thought of the chances of pikes against Armstrong guns, or of the stand of the magnificent Brotherhood against twenty-six thousand soldiers, and twelve thousand Lincoln green policemen, who have Enfield rifles and sword-bayonets, and each man of whom is worth three soldiers, as being a trained, intellectual being, and not a machine.*

At the same time, it is not to be supposed that the mass of the people is disaffected. This has been more a coquetting with the vanities of rebellion, than a rebellion. One fact must be always expected, and seems next to impossible to be eradicated: that is, a steady dislike to the English. Some part of it (in the writer's opinion) must be set to the account of the English themselves—at least, of such English as come into the country and carry with them the tone of the true British supremacy. It is to be heard from the British contractor and his workman, who swear at the hodman as "you damned H Irishman," up to the official from Dublin Castle, who coolly tells his host, whose mutton he is cutting, that this or that is "so Irish." There is the fatal barrier of RELIGION; there is the miserable confusion of the land question; there is in the government a narrow red-tapeism which would in a dull way fit a chilling official coldness and constraint to impulsive manners and temperament.

THE GRANITE CITY.

I DO not know a more delightful sensation than that which we feel on revisiting after many years the scenes of our boyhood. When I leapt on shore from the deck of the City of London, and set my foot upon my native heath—or more literally granite—I leapt back through twenty years into the past, carrying the present along with me. On these very stones I had stood when a boy, wistfully gazing after this very ship as she slowly steamed away, southward bound, for London! I have watched her until she disappeared round the headland, and still lingered there gazing at the trail of smoke which she left behind. I remember how I sighed as I turned away—sighed to think that I was not going with her; how impatient I was with everything

* The Irish policeman must read, write, cast accounts, and pass an examination in various branches. He is trained to act by himself, or with a fellow, is sent into a wild district on "a mission," and is thus taught to rely on himself and his own resources. He can chase a criminal a whole day over hill and valley, and is generally the best jumper and wrestler in the parish. Such a combination ought to make a wonderful soldier.

about me; how weary of my college life; how I longed to see the grand world that lay beyond the hills! Many a time I looked up into the heavens and marked the position of the Northern Bear, and, setting my back to it, I knew that my face was towards the great city which I longed to see. I envied the moon up there looking down upon it!

But now when my ambition has been fulfilled, when my longing has been satisfied, when I have seen all the kingdoms of the world and the great cities thereof, I come back to the scenes of my early days with something of the chastened feeling of the Prodigal Son. Not that I have wasted my substance in riotous living, or drunk too deeply of the cup of the world's pleasures; not that I have proved to myself that all is vanity; but because I am weary of the noisy traffic of the great Highway and long for rest in quiet spots, where I can muse in peace amid the simple memories of the past.

Here amid the noise and bustle of this busy quay I am as much alone as if I were wandering in some secluded country lane. The old familiar houses speak to me with silent voices; the stones that knew my footstep in days of old whisper pleasant greetings in my ear. The human faces I see are all strange to me, the voices unfamiliar. The only faces that I know and that seem to know me are the faces of the clocks. They are not changed. Perhaps, being in Time's employ, their master favours them and exempts them from the tax which he levies upon everything else—on the principle of letting the "hands" in a business have goods at cost price. In the days of my youth I have looked up at yonder clock and said, "Haste thee, haste thee; why so slow?" I look up at it now and say, "Gently, gently; why so fast?" When I have been conjugating "tupto" how I have longed for it to strike! I would have it linger now and not be so ready with those warning bells. Do you know the sensation of being in a state of complete sensuous happiness; of being agreeably intoxicated with pleasant thoughts and feelings! And did you never wish to be struck so—to be turned into a pillar of sweetness as Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt? I know the sensation well; it is one which leaves no higher happiness beyond. It is a feeling that may come upon you in a cellar, or in a garret, and while it lasts you will not wish for heaven itself. Such a feeling did I have, while walking along in a dream, among the old familiar streets of Aberdeen.

Our loftiest thoughts are sometimes associated with very common things. The sublime and the ridiculous do not always walk a step apart; they often go arm in arm. I come to a certain shop, and a philosophical turn is given to my thoughts by the sight of a meerschaum pipe in the window. It is fashioned in the form of a shell. Such a pipe as that did I envy when I was a boy, strictly forbidden by my parents ever to smoke. It was in this very shop window that

I saw it. I looked at it with longing eyes day after day for many weeks. I saved up my money to buy it; but I never saved enough. The coveted pipe never became mine. But now I would not give a fig for all the pipes in the shop. Yet, I don't know that I ever aspired to anything so eagerly as the possession of that shell-shaped meerschaum pipe which lay in this window twenty years ago. I have no desire in connexion with the pipe-shop at all now, except that the proprietor would let me sit down upon his doorstep and have a good think.

What a long way it used to seem from the steam-boat wharf to Marischal-street. It seems very short now. I turn the corner before I know where I am, and straight before me I see inscribed on the front of a blue granite house, the words "Theatre Royal." There I saw my first play. It was Pizarro. I went to the pit, and for three hours dwelt in a land of the wildest delight. Such handsome noble men; such beautiful majestic women! And the fire from heaven! How solemn and imposing that was! I did not see the wire, and the bit of tow steeped in spirits of wine; which I have subsequently become familiar with, and consequently learned to regard with contempt. Nor was I personally acquainted with the majestic Pizarro and the noble Rolla. Alas that I ever should come to know them personally, and find out that they were only five feet eight, and liked rum, and when in London were reduced to the sad extent of playing general utility. There was a farce after the tragedy which gave me great delight. I don't remember the name of it; but I remember two officers in blue frock-coats and red trousers who sat at a table and drank, and a comic groom who sang a funny song about a fair, and a pretty actress—oh, such a pretty actress, who—well, I only remember that I fell over head and ears in love with her and haunted her steps, and wrote letters to her, when I ought to have been writing my Greek exercises, and learning a moral from the little story of the pretty Grecian girls who laughed at Anacreon and called him a silly old man. Ah, how pretty she was; how clever! I am glad I never saw her afterwards, for I still retain the impression that she was the cleverest and prettiest actress that ever was. I carefully preserve a similar impression with regard to Pizarro—and believe that it is the finest tragedy that ever was represented, albeit I know that it is "down right booth at a fair." But nothing will induce me to be convinced of this by going to see another performance of the piece. I will adhere to my early faith.

I go across the road and look at the bill. I notice the names of actors whom I know. No doubt they are at this moment rehearsing the tragedy of King Richard III., which is to be performed this evening by special desire. Shall I call upon them? What! And see that the Peruvian altar is composed of an old egg-box, that heaven's lightning-conductor is a bit of bell

wire, and that the lightning itself is paraffin! Never. Let me keep at least one disenchanted corner in my memory of the theatre.

I bend my steps towards the street where I lived when I was a student. There is a railway station at the end of it now. The railway had not come so far north in my day, and when we travelled it was by the mail-coach, with a guard in a red coat blowing a horn behind. The railway, I see, has respectfully stopped at the end of my street, but whether out of regard for me, or in consequence of the elevated nature of the situation, I will not stay to inquire. Even with this alteration in the aspect of the place I could find my way to number eleven blindfold. This must be the house—yes, this *is* the house, notwithstanding that it has been converted into a shop for the sale of whisky to be drunk on the premises. Had it been otherwise, I might have had some delicacy about asking permission to view my old abode. As it is, I walk in and order half a gill, which is brought to me in the very apartment where I was formerly accustomed to drink—I will not say deeply—of the waters of the Pierian spring. There was my grate: I knew its pattern: there was my brass gas-pipe: I knew its twist. There was the recess in which stood my box bed. It was a "press" now for whisky-bottles and gill-stoups! What am I to make of this? The student's lodging-house turned into a shebeen. Bacchus sitting in the chair of Minerva. Is this a symptom of the decline and fall of Aberdeen? Well; no, I think not. The simple fact is, that a public-house was wanted here to accommodate the officials employed at the railway. But how easy it would be for me to say that it was the direct consequence of the decline of learning and morals. A university had been swept away, and there were no students to take lodgings. So grossness stepped in and turned the homes of the students into dram-shops. It would look very feasible. And is it not in such fashion that history is sometimes written? I have been walking through unfrequented by-streets in order to have my own company. You cannot muse when any one is by your side talking to you. A single word uttered by a known voice breaks the spell of your reverie, and presto! your pleasant waking dream has fled. Thus on turning the corner of my street, I am saluted with—"Ha, how d'ye do; welcome back to Scotland," and I awake at once to hard realities. And the realities here are very hard indeed.

If the world last long enough, Aberdeen will assuredly come to be known as the Eternal City; and, physically at least, it will have as good a claim as Rome to that title. If they escape fire, there is no reason why the houses in Union-street should not last for a thousand years. They are built entirely of granite, and the walls are three times as thick as those of the best brick houses which are now being built in London. And while they will last for many centuries, their outer walls will remain as white

and clean as when they were first erected. The smoke which settles upon them one day, is washed off by the rain the next. The boasted endurance of marble is nothing to that of granite. Marble crumbles and cracks after a century or two, and its whiteness is dimmed in a few short years. Granite lasts for ever, and every storm of wind and rain renews its pristine brightness. Houses which Dr. Johnson saw and admired are as stable and as white and clean as they were a hundred years ago. "They build almost wholly with granite," said the doctor; "which is well known not to want hardness." No, indeed, hardness is exactly what it does not want; and why the learned doctor, who was a Dictionary-maker, and prided himself upon his English, could not have said in a straightforward manner that "it was very hard," I cannot imagine. "It is beautiful," he adds, and "must be very lasting." Dr. Johnson was three days in Aberdeen, and did not care to inquire what was the staple of its trade; albeit he received the freedom of the city, with liberty to set up shop within its precincts. All that he says about the town is, that it has two universities and an English church, and that the women of the lower class are visibly employed in knitting stockings. Yet Aberdeen was no insignificant place even in Dr. Johnson's time.

Sir, let us take a walk down Union-street, and see what it is like to-day. This Union-street is one of the streets of the world. For the solidity, regularity, and beauty of its buildings, it has no equal, even in Paris. The roadway and pavements, formed of the same grey granite of which the houses are built, are singularly clean, and the whole street for the length of a mile looks as if it had been cut and fashioned out of a long ridge of solid rock. From one end of the street to the other there is not a brick nor a single patch of stucco to be seen. All is solid granite, put together so nicely that even the mortar is invisible. The shops are splendid, most of them having large plate-glass windows in which all kinds of rich goods are displayed with much taste. The fruiterers' shops are particularly attractive, and the show of fruit in some of them is not inferior to that of the middle row in Covent Garden, London. The public buildings constructed of granite, and in the purest Grecian style of architecture, have a most noble appearance. There is financial stability in their very look. No one could have any apprehension of such banks as those breaking. The market opposite the post-office is an immense building. The lower part is devoted to fish; the upper part to fruit and vegetables; the side-passages to butchers' meat, poultry, game, &c., and the galleries to fancy wares of all kinds. In fact, the Aberdeen market combines Covent Garden, Billingsgate, Newgate, and Leadenhall markets, and the Lowther Arcade, all in one. It is a most commodious and well-contrived structure, and the Duke of Bedford might do well to run down and take a look at it before he decides upon the plan for a

new market in Covent Garden. Aberdeen abounds with educational and charitable institutions. It had until lately two universities—King's and Marischal Colleges—which, I regret to say, are now united. Its grammar-school—where Lord Byron began his early studies—is one of the most ancient and famous seminaries in Scotland: the nursery of many cultivated intellects, whose influence has helped to sway the destinies of the world. Among the philanthropic institutions may be mentioned the Royal Infirmary, one of the most splendid granite buildings in the kingdom; Gordon's Hospital, an institution similar to George Heriot's in Edinburgh, for the maintenance of poor and fatherless children; and the Orphan Asylum, built and endowed, at an expense of thirty thousand pounds, by Mrs. Elmslie, a native of Aberdeen. In every respect, Aberdeen is as handsome, as well-to-do, and as clean a town, as is to be met with between Land's End and John o'Groat's. A stranger entering it for the first time will be reminded of Paris—I mean the new Paris of Napoleon the Third. It is like Paris in the whiteness and regularity of its buildings, and also in the picturesque character of the costumes of the market-women and fishwives. There, however, the likeness ends. There are few "sights" or shows in Aberdeen. In that respect it is a very severe town indeed. There are only three monuments: one of the late Duke of Gordon, another of Prince Albert, recently erected, and a market cross. That of the Prince Consort is a monument of high-backed chair and jack-boots. From one point of view you cannot see the Prince for chair, from another you cannot see him for robes, and from a third you cannot see him for boots. The Prince is better represented in a sixpenny chimney ornament. There is a great lack of amusement in Aberdeen. There is a theatre, and there is a music-hall; but neither of these temples is of a sufficiently high class to attract the better classes of the people. The result is, that when the better classes want a sensation, they go to preachings and revival meetings; or if they are not disposed that way, they spend the evening over the toddy tumbler. I am more than ever convinced that the drinking habits of my countrymen, and their fanatical character, are chiefly due to the want of rational amusements. Here in Aberdeen, which has a population of nearly eighty thousand inhabitants, there is no public amusement of any kind (except an occasional concert) which the respectable classes can venture to patronise. Ladies and gentlemen cannot go to a theatre where the boys smoke pipes in the gallery. The theatre has been pushed away out of sight in a cold steep street near the shore, as if the town were ashamed of it. It is not "the thing" to go to the theatre in Aberdeen; and the better classes being deprived of the sensation play, must be content with the sensation sermon. Preachings are held every day in the week, and the sermon actually takes the place of the play. It is offered as a sort of evening's entertainment.

As a centre of trade, Aberdeen is a town of great importance; but if you ask me what is the chief article of manufacture in this "northern city cold," as the local poets call it, I answer you, not wool, nor flax, nor iron, nor paper, nor ships—though all these things are manufactured in high perfection—but men. The raw material is produced all round about in the lowlands of the south and east, and in the highlands of the north and west; but here, in the grammar-school and in the university, it is made up for the markets of the world.

HALF A MILLION OF MONEY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER LXIII. MR. FORSYTH.

MR. TREFALDEN was, undeniably, a very gentlemanly man. His manners were courteous; his exterior was prepossessing; and there was an air of self-possessed quiet about all that he said and did which made his society very agreeable. He talked well about what he had read and seen; and if even his knowledge of things lying beyond the radius of his own profession was somewhat superficial, he knew, at all events, how to turn it to the best account. At the same time there was nothing of the brilliant raconteur about him. He never talked in epigrams, nor indulged in flashes of sarcasm, nor condescended to make puns, like many men whose abilities were inferior to his own; but there was, nevertheless, a vein of subdued pleasantry running through his conversation, which, although it was not wit, resembled wit very closely.

Most people liked him; and it was a noticeable fact that, amid the wide circle of his business acquaintances, the best-bred people were those whose disposition towards him was the most friendly. Lord Castletowers thought very highly of him. Viscount Esher, whose legal affairs he had transacted for the last ten years, was accustomed to speak of him in terms which were particularly flattering upon the lips of that stately gentleman of the old school. The Duke of Doncaster, the Earl of Ipswich, and other noblemen of equal standing, looked upon him as quite a model attorney. Even Lady Castletowers approved of William Trefalden to a degree that was almost cordial, and made a point of receiving him very graciously whenever he went down into Surrey.

By mere men of business—such men, for instance, as Laurence Greatorex—he was less favourably regarded. They could not appreciate his manner. So far, indeed, from appreciating it, his manner was precisely the one thing they most of all disliked and mistrusted. They could never read his thoughts nor guess at his cards, nor gain the smallest insight into his opinions and character. They acknowledged that he was clever; but qualified the admission by adding that he was "too clever by half." In short, William Trefalden's popularity lay, for the most part, to the west of Temple-bar.

Gifted, then, with a manner which was in itself a passport to good society, it was not surprising that the lawyer made a favourable impression upon the ladies in Brudenell-terrace. It suited him to call himself by some name not his own, and he chose that of Forsyth; so they knew him as Mr. Forsyth, and that was all. Resolved, however, to win their confidence, he spared no pains, and hesitated before no means whereby to attain his object. He traded unscrupulously on their love for the husband and father whom they had lost; and, skilfully following up his first lead, he made more way in their regard by professing to have known Edgar Rivière in the days of his youth, than by lavishing Saxon's hundreds on the worthless pictures which had served to open to him the doors of their home.

And this admirable idea had been wholly unpremeditated. It came to him like a flash of inspiration; and as an inspiration he welcomed it, acted upon it, developed it with the tact of a master. Careful not to overact the part, he spoke of the painter as of one whom he would have desired to know more intimately had he continued to reside in England, whose character interested him, and whose early gifts had awakened his admiration. He evinced an eager but respectful desire to glean every detail of his after-career. He bought up the whole dreary stock of Nymphs and Dryads with assiduous liberality, carrying away one or more on the occasion of every visit. Nothing was too large, too small, or too sketchy for him.

An acquaintance conducted in this fashion was not difficult of cultivation. The munificent and courteous patron soon glided into the sympathetic adviser and friend. Frequent calls, prolonged conversations, unobtrusive attentions, produced their inevitable effect; and before many weeks had gone by, the widow and orphan believed in William Trefalden as if he were an oracle. Their gratitude was as unbounded as their faith. Strange to English life, ignorant of the world, poor and in trouble, they stood terribly in need of a friend; and, having found one, accepted his opinions and followed his advice implicitly. Thus it came to pass that the lawyer established himself upon precisely that footing which was most favourable to his designs, and became not only the confidant of all their plans, but the skilful arbiter of all their actions. Thus, also, it came to pass that at the very time when Saxon Trefalden believed them to be already dwelling upon the shores of the Mediterranean, Mrs. and Miss Rivière were still in England, and temporarily settled in very pleasant apartments in the neighbourhood of Sydenham.

Hither their devoted friend came frequently to call upon them; and it so happened that he paid them a visit on the evening of the very day that Saxon set sail for Sicily.

He went down to Sydenham in an extremely pleasant frame of mind. Ignorant of their sudden change of plans, he still believed that his cousin and the Earl were on their way to

Norway; and it was a belief from which he derived considerable satisfaction. It fell in charmingly with his present arrangements; and those arrangements were now so carefully matured, and so thoroughly en train, that it seemed impossible they should fail of success in any particular. Perhaps had he known how the little Albula was even then gliding before the wind in the direction of the Channel Islands, instead of tacking painfully about in the straits of Dover, Mr. Trefalden would scarcely have arrived at Mrs. Rivière's apartments in so complacent a mood.

It was delightful to be welcomed as he was welcomed. It was delightful to see the book and the embroidery laid aside as he came in—to meet such looks of confidence and gladness—to be listened to when he spoke, as if all his words were wisdom—to sit by the open window, breathing the perfume of the flowers, listening to Helen's gentle voice, and dreaming delicious dreams of days to come. For William Trefalden was more than ever in love—more than ever resolved to compass the future that he had set before him.

"We thought we should see you this evening, Mr. Forsyth," said Mrs. Rivière, when the first greetings had been exchanged. "We were saying so but a few moments before you came to the gate."

"A Londoner is glad to escape from the smoke of the town on such a delicious evening," replied Mr. Trefalden, "even though it be at the risk of intruding too often upon his suburban friends."

"Can the only friend we have in England come too often?"

"Much as I may wish it to be so, I fear the case is not quite an impossible one."

"Mamma has been out to-day in a Bath-chair, Mr. Forsyth," said Helen. "Do you not think she is looking better?"

"I am quite sure of it," replied the lawyer.

"I feel better," said the invalid. "I feel that I gain strength daily."

"That is well."

"And Doctor Fisher says that I am improving."

"I attach more value, my dear madam, to your own testimony on that point, than to the opinion of any physician, however skilful," observed Mr. Trefalden.

"I have great faith in Doctor Fisher," said Mrs. Rivière.

"And I have great faith in this pure Sydenham air. I cannot tell you how rejoiced I am that you consented to remove from Camberwell."

Mrs. Rivière sighed.

"Do you not think I might soon go back to Italy?" she asked.

"It is the very subject which I have chiefly come down this evening to discuss," replied the lawyer.

The lady's pale face lighted up at this reply.

"I am so anxious to go," she said, eagerly; "I feel as if there were life for me in Italy."

"The question is, my dear madam, whether you are strong enough to encounter the fatigue of so long a journey."

"I am sure that mamma is not nearly strong enough," said Miss Rivière, quickly.

"I might travel slowly."

"To travel slowly is not enough," said Mr. Trefalden. "You should travel without anxiety—I mean, you should be accompanied by some person who could make all the rough places smooth and all the crooked paths straight for you throughout the journey."

"I should be unwilling to incur the expense of employing a courier, if I could possibly avoid it," said Mrs. Rivière.

"No doubt: for a courier is not only a costly, but a very anomalous and disagreeable incumbrance. He is both your servant and your master. Might it not, however, be possible for you to join a party travelling towards the same point?"

"You forget that we know no one in this country."

"Nay, those things are frequently arranged, even with strangers."

"Besides, who would care to be burdened with two helpless women? No stranger would accept the responsibility."

Mr. Trefalden paused a moment before replying.

"Given an equally suitable climate," he said, "I presume you are not absolutely wedded to Italy as a place of residence?"

"I love it better than any other country in the world."

"Yet I think I have heard you say that you are not acquainted with the southern coast?"

"True; we always lived in Florence."

"Then neither Mentone nor Nice would possess any charm of association for you?"

"Only the association of language and climate."

"And of these two conditions, that of climate can alone be pronounced essential; but I should say that you might make a more favourable choice than either. Has it never occurred to you that the air of Egypt or Madeira might be worth a trial, if only for one winter?"

"Mamma has been advised to try both," said Miss Rivière.

"But I prefer Italy," said the invalid. "The happiest years of my life were spent under an Italian sky."

"Pardon me; but should you, my dear madam, allow yourself to be influenced by preference in such a case as this?" asked Mr. Trefalden, very deferentially.

"I can offer a better reason, then—poverty. It is possible to live in Italy for very, very little, when one knows the people and the country so well as we know them; but I could not afford to live in Madeira or Egypt."

"The journey to Madeira is easy, and not very expensive," said Mr. Trefalden.

Mrs. Rivière shook her head.

"I should not dare to undertake it," she replied.

"Not with a careful escort?"

"Nay, if even that were my only difficulty, where should I find one?"

"In myself."

The mother and daughter looked up with surprise.

"In you, Mr. Forsyth?" they exclaimed, simultaneously

Mr. Trefalden smiled.

"You need not let that astonish you," he said; "it is my intention to spend all my future winters abroad, and I am greatly tempted by much that I have heard and read lately about Madeira. I am a free man, however, and if Mrs. Rivière preferred to venture upon Egypt, I would quite willingly exchange Funchal for the Nile."

"This is too much goodness."

"And, if you will not think that I take an unwarrantable liberty in saying so, I may add that the question of expense must not be allowed to enter into your calculations."

"But——"

"One moment, my dear madam," interrupted the lawyer. "Pray do not suppose that I am presuming to offer you pecuniary assistance. Nothing of the kind. I am simply offering to advance you whatever sums you may require upon the remainder of Mr. Rivière's paintings and sketches; or, if you prefer it, I will at once purchase them from you."

"In order that I may have the means of going to Madeira?" said Mrs. Rivière, colouring painfully. "No, my kind friend; I begin to understand you now. It cannot be."

"I fear you are beginning only to misunderstand me," replied Mr. Trefalden, with grave earnestness. "If you were even right—if I were only endeavouring to assist the widow of one whose memory and genius I deeply revere, I do not think you ought to feel wounded by the motive; but I give you my word of honour that such is not my prevailing reason."

"Do you mean that you really wish to possess . . ."

"Every picture from which you are willing to part."

"But you would then have from twenty-five to thirty paintings from the same brush—many of them quite large subjects?"

"So much the better."

"Yet, it seems inconceivable that . . ."

"That I should desire to make a Rivière collection? Such, nevertheless, is my ambition."

"Then you must have a spacious gallery?"

Mr. Trefalden shook his head.

"I have no gallery," he said, "at present. Some day, perhaps, if I ever fulfil a long-cherished dream, I may settle abroad, and build a house and gallery in some beautiful spot; but that is only a project, and the destinies of projects are uncertain."

He glanced at Miss Rivière as he said this, and seemed to suppress a sigh. She was looking away at the moment; but her mother saw the glance, and Mr. Trefalden intended that she should see it.

"In the mean while," he added, after a pause, "I am not sure that I shall be so selfish as to hoard these pictures. The world has never yet recognised Edgar Rivière; and it would be only an act of justice on my part if I were to do something which should at once secure to his works their proper position in the history of English art."

"What can you do? What do you mean?" faltered Mrs. Rivière.

"I scarcely know yet. I thought at one time that it would be well to exhibit them in some good room; but that plan might have its disadvantages. The most direct course would be, I suppose, to present them to the nation."

The mother and daughter looked at each other in speechless emotion. Their eyes were full of tears, and their hearts of gratitude and wonder.

"But, in any case," continued Mr. Trefalden, "the pictures need cleaning and framing. Nothing could be done with them before next year, and they must be mine before even that amount of progress can be made."

"They are yours from this moment, most generous friend and benefactor," sobbed the widow. "Oh, that he could have lived to see this day!"

But Mr. Trefalden would not suffer the ladies to express their thanks. He was proud to be regarded by them as a friend, and still more proud to be the humble instrument by means of which a great name might be rescued from undeserved obscurity; but he protested against being styled their benefactor. He then adverted, with much delicacy, to the question of price, stated that he should at once pay in a certain sum at a certain bank to Mrs. Rivière's credit; touched again upon the subject of Madeira; and, having of course carried his point, rose, by-and-by, to take his leave.

"Then, my dear madam, I am to have the honour of escorting you to Funchal in the course of some three or four weeks from the present time?" he said at parting.

"If Mr. Forsyth will consent to be so burdened."

"I think myself very happy in being permitted to accompany you," replied Mr. Trefalden; "and if I have named too early a date . . ."

"Nay, a day hence would scarcely be too soon for me," said Mrs. Rivière. "My heart aches for the sunny south."

To which the lawyer replied by a courteous assurance that his own arrangements should be hastened as much as possible, and took his departure.

"Mr. Forsyth has quite what our aunt, old Lady Glastonbury, used to call the 'grand air,'" said Mrs. Rivière, as Mr. Trefalden took off his hat to them at the gate. "And he is handsome."

"I do not think him handsome," replied her daughter; "but he is the most liberal of men."

"Magnificently liberal. He must be very rich, too; and I am sure he is very good. Let me see, there was a Forsyth, I think, who mar-

ried a daughter of Lord Ingleborough in the same year that Alethea became Lady Castletowers. I should like to ask whether he belongs to that family."

"Nay, darling, why put the question? Our Mr. Forsyth may come of some humbler stock, and then . . ."

"You are right, Helen; and he can afford to dispense with mere nobility. Do you know, my child, I have sometimes thought of late—"

"What have you thought, my own dear mother?"

"That he—that Mr. Forsyth is inclined to admire my little Helen very much."

The young girl drew back suddenly, and the smile vanished from her lips.

"Oh, mamma," she said, "I hope not."

"Why so, my child? Mr. Forsyth is rich, kind, good, and a gentleman. His wife would be a very happy woman."

"But I do not love him."

"Of course you do not love him. We do not even know whether he loves you; but the time may come . . ."

"Heaven forbid it!" said Miss Rivière, in a low voice.

"And I say, Heaven grant it," rejoined her mother, earnestly. "I would die to-morrow, thankfully, if I but knew that my child would not be left alone in the wide world when I was gone."

The girl flung her arms passionately round her mother's neck, and burst into tears.

"Hush, hush!" she cried, "not a word of death, my darling. You must live for me. Oh, how glad—how glad I am that you are going to Madeira!"

The invalid shook her head, and leaned back wearily.

"Ah," she sighed again, "I had rather have gone to Italy."

CHAPTER LXIV. THE BARRICADE IN THE VIA LOMBARDI.

DISAGREEABLY conscious of being roused, as it were, against his will from something heavier than sleep, of a painful struggle for breath, and of a sudden deluge of cold water, Saxon opened his eyes, and found Lord Castletowers leaning over him.

"Where am I?" he asked, staring round in a bewildered way. "What is the matter with me?"

"Nothing, I hope, my dear fellow," replied his friend. "Five minutes ago, I pulled you out from under a man and a horse, and made certain you were dead; but since then, having fetched a little water and brought you round, and being, moreover, unable to find any holes in your armour, I am inclined to hope that no damage has been done. Do you think you can get up?"

Saxon took the Earl's hand, and rose without much difficulty. His head ached, and he felt dizzy; but that was all.

"I suppose I have been stunned," he said,

looking round at the empty battery. "Is the battle won and over?"

The guns were gone, and the ground was ploughed with their heavy wheel-tracks. Dark pools of blood and heaps of slain showed where the struggle had been fiercest; and close against Saxon's feet lay the bodies of a cuirassier and two Neapolitan gunners. At the sight of these last he shuddered and turned away, for he knew that they had all three been shot by his own hand.

"Why, no; the battle is not over," replied the Earl; "neither can I say that it is won; but it is more than half won. We have taken the guns, and the Neapolitans have retreated into the town; and now a halt has been sounded, and the men are taking a couple of hours' rest. The bridge over the Nocito, and all the open country up to the very gates of Melazzo, are ours."

"There has been sharp fighting here," said Saxon.

"The sharpest we have seen to-day," replied the Earl. "Their cavalry re-took the guns, and drove Dunn's men out of the battery; but our fellows divided on each side of the road, received them between two fires, and when they tried to charge back again, barred the road and shot the leaders down. It was splendidly done; but Garibaldi was in imminent danger for a few moments, and, I believe, shot one trooper with his own hand. After that, the Neapolitans broke through and escaped, leaving the guns and battery in our hands."

"And you saw it all?"

"All. I was among those who barred the road, and was close behind Garibaldi the whole time. And now, as you seem to be tolerably steady on your legs again, I propose that we go down to some more sheltered place, and get something to eat. This Sicilian noonday sun is fierce enough to melt the brains in one's skull; and fighting makes men hungry."

Some large wood-stores and barns had been broken open for the accommodation of the troops, and thither the friends repaired for rest and refreshment. Lying in the shelter of a shed beside the Nocito, they ate their luncheon of bread and fruit, smoked their cigarettes, and listened to the pleasant sound of the torrent hurrying to the sea. All around and about, in the shade of every bush, and the shelter of every shed, lay the tired soldiers—a motley, dusty, war-stained throng, some eating, some sleeping, some smoking, some bathing their hot feet in the running stream, some, with genuine Italian thoughtlessness, playing at morra as they lay side by side on the green sward, gesticulating as eagerly, and laughing as gaily, as though the reign of battle and bloodshed had passed away from the earth. Now and then, a wounded man was carried past on a temporary litter; now and then, a Neapolitan prisoner was brought in; now and then, a harmless gun was fired from the fortress. Thus the hot noon went by, and for two brief hours peace prevailed.

"Poor Vaughan!" said the Earl, now hearing of his death for the first time. "He had surely some presentiment upon his mind this morning. What has become of the horse?"

Saxon explained that he had sent it to the rear, with orders that it should be conveyed back to Meri, and carefully attended to.

"I do not forget," he added, "that we are the repositories of his will, and that Gulnare is now a legacy. I think it will be wise to send her to Palermo for the present, to the care of Signor Colonna."

"Undoubtedly. Do you know, Trefalden, I have more than suspected at times that—that he loved Miss Colonna."

"I should not wonder if he did," replied Saxon, gloomily.

"Well, he died a soldier's death, and to-morrow, if I live, I will see that he has a soldier's burial. A braver fellow never entered the service."

And now, the allotted time having expired, the troops were again assembled, and the columns formed for action. Garibaldi went on board the Tuckori, a Neapolitan steam-frigate that had gone over to him with men, arms, and ammunition complete, at an early stage of the war, and was now lying off Melazzo in the bay to the west of the promontory. Hence, with no other object than to divert the attention of the garrison, he directed a rapid fire on the fortress, while his army advanced in three divisions to the assault of the town.

Medici took the westward beach; Cosenz the road to the Messina gate; and Malenchini the Porta di Palermo. This time, Saxon and Castletowers marched with the Cacciatori under General Cosenz.

By two o'clock, they found themselves under the walls of Melazzo. The garrison had by this time become aware of the advancing columns. First one shell, then another, then half a dozen together, came soaring like meteors over the heads of the besiegers, who only rushed up the more eagerly to the assault, and battered the more desperately against the gate. A shot or two from an old twelve-pounder brought it down presently with a crash; the Garibaldians poured through; and, in the course of a few seconds, almost without knowing how they came there, Saxon and Castletowers found themselves inside the walls, face to face with a battalion of Neapolitan infantry.

Both bodies fired. The Neapolitans, having delivered their volley, retreated up the street. The Garibaldians followed. Presently the Neapolitans turned, fired again, and again retreated. They repeated this manœuvre several times, the Garibaldians always firing and following, till they came to the market-place, in the centre of the town. Here they found Colonel Dunn's regiment in occupation of one side of the quadrangle, and a considerable body of Neapolitan troops on the other. The air was full of smoke, and the ground scattered over with groups of killed and wounded. As the smoke cleared, they could see the Neapolitans on the one hand,

steadily loading and aiming—on the other, Dunn's men running tumultuously to and fro, keeping up a rapid but irregular fire.

No sooner, however, had the new comers emerged upon the scene, than a mounted officer came galloping towards them through the thick of the fire.

"Send round a detachment to the Via Lombardi," he said, hurriedly. "They have thrown up a barricade there, which *must* be taken!"

The mention of a barricade was enough for Saxon and Castletowers. Leaving the combatants in the market-place to fight the fight out for themselves, they started with the detachment, and made their way round by a labyrinth of deserted by-streets at the back of the piazza.

A shot was presently fired down upon them from a neighbouring roof—they advanced at a run—turned the angle of the next street—were greeted with three simultaneous volleys from right, left, and centre, and found themselves in the teeth of the barricade. It was a mere pile of carts, paving-stones, and miscellaneous rubbish, about eight feet in height; but, being manned with trained riflemen, and protected by the houses on each side, every window of which bristled with gun-barrels, it proved more formidable than it looked.

The detachment, which consisted mainly of Neapolitan recruits, fell back in disorder, returning only a confused and feeble fire, and leaving some four or five of their number on the ground.

"Avanti!" cried the officer in command.

But not a man stirred.

At that instant the Neapolitans poured in another destructive volley, whereupon the front ranks fairly turned, and tried to escape to the rear.

"Poltroni!" shouted their captain, striking right and left with the flat of his sword, and running along the lines like a madman.

At the same moment Castletowers knocked down one defaulter with the butt-end of his rifle, while Saxon seized another by the collar, dragged him back to the front, drew his revolver from his belt with one hand, and with the other carried the man bodily up against the barricade.

It was a simple act of strength and daring, but it turned the tide as nothing else could have done. Impulsive as savages, and transported in a moment from one extreme of feeling to another, the Sicilians burst into a storm of vivas, and flung themselves at the barricade like tigers.

The Neapolitans might pour in their deadly fire now from house-top and window, might intrench themselves behind a hedge of bayonets, might thrust the dead back upon the living, and defend every inch of their position as desperately as they pleased, but nothing could daunt the courage of their assailants. The men who were running away but a moment before, were now rushing recklessly upon death. Shot

down by scores, they yet pressed on, clambering over the bodies of their fallen comrades, shouting "Viva Garibaldi!" under the muzzles of the Neapolitan rifles, and seizing the very bayonets that were pointed against them.

The struggle was short and bloody. It had lasted scarcely three minutes when the Palermians poured over in one irresistible wave, and the Neapolitans fled precipitately into the piazza beyond.

The victors at once planted a tricolor on the summit of the barricade, manned it with some thirty of their own best riflemen, and proceeded to dislodge such of the enemy as yet retained possession of the houses on either side.

In the mean while, the Garibaldian officer ran up to Saxon with open arms, and thanked him enthusiastically.

"Gallant Inglese!" he said, "but for you, our flag would not be flying here at this moment."

To whom Saxon, pale as death and pointing down to the pile of fallen men at the foot of the barricade, replied:

"Signor capitano, I miss my friend. For God's sake grant me the assistance of a couple of your soldiers to search for his body!"

It was a ghastly task.

The Neapolitans had escaped as soon as they found their position untenable; but the loss of the attacking party was very great. Most of the men immediately under the barricade had been cruelly bayoneted. The dead wore a terrible expression of agony on their colourless faces; but many yet breathed, and those who were conscious pleaded piteously to be put out of their sufferings. One by one, the dead were flung aside, and the wounded carried down to the shade of the houses. One by one, Saxon Trefalden looked into each man's face, helping tenderly to carry the wounded, and reverently to dispose the limbs of the dead, and watching every moment for the finding of his friend.

At length the last poor corpse was lifted—the search completed—the frightful bead-roll told over. Thirty-two were dead, five dying, eleven wounded; but amongst all these, the Earl of Castletowers had no place. Saxon could scarcely believe it. Again and again he went the round of dead and dying; and at last, with bloodstained hands and clothes, and anxious heart, sat down at the foot of the barricade, and asked himself what he should do next.

NEW WORK BY MR. DICKENS,

In Monthly Parts, uniform with the Original Editions of "Pickwick," "Copperfield," &c.

Now publishing, PART XVIII., price 1s. of

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN TWENTY MONTHLY PARTS.

With Illustrations by MARCUS STONE.

London: CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, Piccadilly.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.